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LOOKING AT & THROUGH THE BEAST

Construction of 'Animal' within the Prague Zoo

Diplomová práce

Vedoucí práce: Mgr. Marco Stella

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V Praze dne 26. června 2014 Dana Polakovičová

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I also dedicate this thesis to 'fellow' non-humans of Prague Zoo, among which I realized my fieldwork.

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Abstrakt

Předkládaná diplomová práce vychází z předpokladu, že zoologické zahrady představují kulturní instituce, které zrcadlí to, jak jsou „příroda“ a zvířata sociálně a kulturně interpretovány. Prostřednictvím zúčastněného pozorování sleduje, jakých významů a forem nabývají zvířata pražské zoo skrze pohled návštěvníků, a analýzou obrazových a písemných materiálů vytvořených pražskou zoo zkoumá to, jak jsou tato zvířata konstruována prostřednictvím samotné zoologické zahrady. Zvíře žijící v zoo je považováno za specifický typ zvířete, odlišný jak od zvířat domácích, tak i divokých. Zoologická zahrada v Praze a její návštěvníci vytvářejí chimérického tvora, jenž je schopen obsáhnout a propojit různé a často protichůdné trendy a koncepce toho, jak je nahlíženo na zvířata v zoo.

Klíčová slova:
zoologická zahrada, zvíře, zoo-zvíře, vztah lidí a zvířat, reprezentace, pohled, Zoo Praha

Abstract

The thesis is based on the presumption that zoological gardens are cultural institutions which reflect social and cultural interpretations of what is called 'nature' and animals. By analyzing data gained through participant observation it focuses on the meanings and forms which are ascribed to animals living in the Prague Zoo via the gaze of visitors. Furthermore, by analysis of visual and textual sources provided by the zoo, I examine how the 'zoo animal' is constructed by the zoo itself. I argue that this zoo animal constitutes a specific form of the animal, different from both the domesticated and the wild one. The zoo and its visitors create a chimeric 'beast' which encompasses different and even contradictory trends and conceptions of thinking about the zoo animal.

Key words:
zoological garden, animal, zoo animal, human-animal relationship, representation, gaze, Prague Zoo

Introduction

It is quite hard to overestimate the significance of the role animals have played in human societies. Depending on the particular social, cultural and historical contexts, as well as the biological species of the given animal, animals took over different meanings from objects of worship, companions, trade items, working tools to food etc. The relationship between humans and the domesticated animal is a complex one. Nevertheless, wild animals, or those not in a direct or symbiotic relation with humans, also emerge as relevant by providing food and material, as well as for human consciousness, creating diverse linkages and relations. For many urban people, the possibilities of meeting an animal, besides the narrow categories of pets or vermin, are rather scarce. Zoological gardens thus represent an important social and cultural institution in which the relationship with animals is materialized, as they constitute a "*key site of animal presentation and of mass tourism*" (Beardsworth and Bryman 2001, 83). It is one of the few places where one can meet the 'wild' animal, even though this does not happen as a direct unrestricted encounter. Modern urban individuals experience animals in zoos via their presentation in a secure, separated manner, in an environment that is designed to satisfy the human gaze, but also through their various representations, whether realistic, symbolic or anthropomorphic ones.

The phenomenon of keeping and exhibiting animals can be traced to the ancient civilizations of Mesopotamia, Egypt or Rome, where captured wild animals served as a status symbol. This tradition found its continuation in the medieval aristocratic circles and their vogue in lion houses, menageries and cabinets of curiosities, which later transformed into zoological gardens in the modern sense. However, the narrative used by modern zoos is also changing and evolving. The first zoos were shaped either as scientific institutions (e.g. the Zoological Society of London) or as an attraction for the general public (Hagenbeck's zoo in Hamburg). Today, zoos portray themselves primarily as institutions aimed at raising environmental awareness and protecting endangered species, whilst they often undergo the process of commercialization and broaden the forms of consumption within their scope.

Changes in the modes of presentation and representation of animals and the accentuation of particular functions of the zoo institution reflect the understanding of the human-animal relationship in the given era. These specific characteristics of zoological gardens are the reason why I chose this setting to explore the ways in which the animal is perceived and which different forms and meanings the animal can take — in other words, what is *an animal* for the people who visit a zoo and how is the concept of animal constructed

through their gaze?

The present thesis is divided into three main parts. In the first, methodological one, I specify the objective of the research and pose the main research questions. Subsequently, I outline the methodological basis of my work. The second part provides the theoretical framework. Via the introduction to the role of animals in society and human-animal relations, as well as their roles within social and cultural anthropology, I set a general context within which zoo animals from Prague are looked at and discussed. The existing concepts of the animal, the 'wild' animal and the possible position of zoo animals within them are introduced, together with a theory of representation, as the zoo animal will be analyzed in its different forms. An underlying theme of the thesis is the relation of gaze and power applied on the zoo environment, therefore the concept of gaze is also brought up. With the third part I enter into the zoo space, through the history of keeping and exhibiting animals, a phenomenon which found its most vital form in zoological gardens, or the changing function of zoos, whether the declared or the implicit ones. After this introduction, I reflect on the controversies that are proper to the zoo institutions and on how they are perceived. These controversies and paradoxes project themselves also into zoo animals. The last section of this part is thus focused on finding and defining the various forms and layers that construct the entity that is designated as the 'zoo animal'.

1 Methodology

1.1 Objective of the Thesis and Research Questions

The aim of this thesis is to determine the principal role and form of zoo animals from the perspective of human visitors of the zoo institution. Therefore, it focuses on the gaze of these humans, on what they look at and how, and on what they see when they look at the animals in the zoo. Furthermore, I distinguish diverse categories which form the basis of how an 'animal' as such is constructed within the Prague Zoo. Thus, given the objective of my thesis, I formulated the main research question as follows:

> **Within the Prague zoo, what does the gaze of human visitors consist of when looking at the animal (representation)?**

Within this question, several subproblems are included, such as:

What are the human visitors looking at?

How are they looking?

What is this 'animal' that is the subject of the gaze?

How does the zoo institution influence this gaze?

In order to answer these questions in my research, I ground the observation of the various forms of animals and the ways people interact with them on Beardsworth's and Bryman's set of modes of experiencing the animal (see 2.2.1) in order to contribute to the issue of how individuals in modern, large-scale, complex urban societies conceptualize and construct the 'wild' animal.

A preliminary assumption upon which this thesis is based is that zoological gardens are cultural institutions — which implies that they are not composed of authentic segments of nature, 'pure' and unmediated, but they reflect social and cultural interpretations of what is called 'nature' and animals. As Anderson claims, "*in terms of its changing animal composition and visual technologies, its exhibition philosophy and social function, the zoo inscribes various human representational and material strategies for domesticating, mythologizing and aestheticizing the animal universe*" (2007, 182). This complex 'beast', composed of the many forms and shapes, in which the animal can be culturally constructed, is the main subject of the present thesis.

1.2 Entering the Field and Research Methods

The initiation into the universe of Prague Zoo as an anthropological field and the basis for my later research was presented by the university course *ZOO. Zoological Garden as a Social Institution*, lead by Mgr. Marco Stella and Mgr. et Mgr. Karolína Pauknerová, PhD. of the Faculty of Humanities, Charles University, in which I participated during the spring semester of 2012. The main objective of the course was to introduce students to the complex institution of the zoological garden from different perspectives: history of the institution, its diverse and changing functions, or the ascribed meanings. It showed the participants how the changing and evolving zoo space is able to communicate the dynamic relationships between categories such as human and non-human, society and nature, wild and domestic etc. Being a new inhabitant of Prague, this was also my first visit to the Prague Zoo.

Entering the universe of Prague Zoo I was confronted with the many strategies of (re)presenting the animal and with the various ways visitors responded to them. At the same time, I was drawn to compare the actual situation with my memories of zoological gardens I visited years ago and with the changes that took place in the meantime and my attitudes towards the zoo institution and keeping and exhibiting of animals. All that lead me to a decision to further explore these phenomena linked to the zoo institution.

The basis of my research thus lies in conducting participant observation within the space of the Prague zoo. Preliminary research was realized within the above-mentioned university course, during which I determined the methods and strategies on how to pursue the observation, how to keep a field diary and when to take field notes. The research itself was conducted in the years 2013 and 2014. I focused on observing people in the zoo, as well as animals in their different representational forms, and the ways people interacted with them. As the zoo is predominantly a place of looking, observation in such an environment is made easier and less noticeable or intrusive for the subjects. The research consisted mainly of passive participation: when engaged in passive participation, the ethnographer is present directly at the scene of action, however, he does not participate or interact with other people to any great extent (Spradley 1980, 59-60). Passive participation is typical for public places, an instance of which the zoo represents. The degree of my involvement was thus generally low to moderate, e.g. when I was asked by some visitors to take a photo of them, when a visitor 'helped me' to find a hidden and hardly visible animal by pointing at it when I was standing next to its enclosure, or when I got engaged in a small talk with a visitor. My role could thus be characterized as mainly a bystander or a spectator of the situations. Within the fieldwork, I

alternated two approaches: either I stayed in a particular place for a period of time and observed, or I moved through the area, following visitors. I chose popular and amply visited enclosures and surroundings, as well as more remote and less visitor-attractive ones and places with diverse animal representations or offering other leisure activities and services in order to receive more various and saturated data.

During my fieldwork, I took notes about the things I had seen and heard. Some of the records were made on the spot, some of them later after leaving the social situation. The observations were recorded in the form of short notes which were subsequently revised and transcribed. After the transcription I proceeded to coding of the data and to identifying certain recurrent themes and categories of meaning, which I have progressively narrowed down.

I also observed the ways in which the animals are represented. For this task, I drew inspiration from the methods of discourse analysis. Rose's approach appears as a relevant source, mainly her *discourse analysis II* as presented in *Visual Methodologies* (2001). Rose is concerned by the ways of interpreting visual images that address questions of cultural meaning and power (2001, 3). Attention is being paid to the notion of discourse as articulated through various kinds of visual images and verbal texts, as well as to the practices of institutions that create them. The basic presumption is that images construct specific views of the social world. Discourse analysis thus explores how these specific views are constructed as real and truthful or natural, and examines their strategies of making themselves persuasive (Rose 2001, 140).

As I draw heavily upon visual materials, the textual part of my thesis is augmented by photographs taken during my fieldwork or acquired from the Prague Zoo's official presentation via their website or advertisements. In order to ensure the anonymity of the human subjects, the pictures where taken in a manner which prevents clear identification and when necessary, the faces of subjects were later adjusted using graphic editor programs. If not stated otherwise, the photographs were provided by me as part of my fieldwork.

2 About Looking

The second part of this thesis deals with the theoretical issues linked to its subject, which can be broadly covered under the term 'looking at animals'. It is divided into three sections. In the first one, *Why Look at Animals?*, I sketch an overview of the changing conceptions of animal as well as of scholarly interest in the human-animal relationship in order to show the significance of animals and their study. The second section focuses on *What Are We Looking at*, that is to say, it studies what we can understand as an animal and its different forms. Finally, the third part of the chapter, *How to Look at Animals?*, deals with the issue of looking and explores the notion of gaze and its power implications.

2.1 Why Look at Animals?

For the following chapter, I have borrowed the title from Berger's influential 1980 essay in which the author explores the relationship between humans and animals, and the significance attributed to the animal and its cultural representations in late modernity. As one of my main research questions deals with the ways in which the 'animal' is understood and constructed, I find it necessary to present the context of the human-animal relations and how the content of what the animal means changed under various social, cultural and economic conditions. The aim of this chapter is to provide an overview of the varying stances toward animals, with paying special attention to postmodernity given the focus of the thesis. In the second part of the chapter I strive to show why we should look at animals within social sciences and why we should study them, particularly in the field of social and cultural anthropology.

2.1.1 Humans and (Other) Animals

The history of relationships between humans and (other) animals is undoubtedly a rich and broad one — we can hardly overestimate the significance of animals, whether domesticated or not, and their different roles in human societies. Animals have lived next to and with people. They were seen as food, prey but also as objects of worship, as human companions, as sources of imagination or entertainment and diversion, as tools providing muscle power or as goods for experimentation.

Due to the interest of this thesis, I focus mainly on the Euro-American context of the

human-animal relationship. The European tradition tends to define the animal negatively, in opposition to human. Furthermore, this dichotomy is not neutral: there is a strong bias towards considering the human as being 'higher' and the animal as 'lower'. By means of a historical overview, I present some of the important conceptions on animals, which lead to this dualist and anthropocentric hierarchical attitude.

If today the animal is often found important merely in the economic sense (i.e. for food, work or materials), it has always been, as Mason (2007, 18-20) emphasizes, a shaper of the human mind and thought: similar yet different, it forces comparisons and rise of consciousness. Observing animals and their behavior supported the development of the human mind and culture throughout evolution, facilitating the understanding of abstract concepts and intangible things. The power of animal images can be affirmed by their presence in language and art, considering the amount of animal-based expressions, and the prominent role of animals in art — whether these objects of art recorded admiration of the portrayed animal itself or these animals stood for other, transferred messages, as symbols or mood-enhancing aids — across the prehistoric cave paintings and the various religious art, where animals often appeared as major symbols (as, for example, the lamb in Christianity).

For hunter communities, animals were generally seen as ancestors or kin and created an important element of their group identities. As there is an overt conflict between this respect and killing of animals, the arising tension has led to the creation of hunting rituals and mythologies in order to seek forgiveness from this 'primal guilt' (Mason 2007, 25). Mason develops an interesting, although somehow problematic theory of human-animal relations based on power balance and gender relations: animals represented the mysterious forces of nature, not accessible to men. As women were defined primarily by their mother role and fecundity, they were associated with the natural world. Men, in order to affirm their status and role in the group had to gain and master the natural forces, which they accomplished through hunting of animals (Mason 2007, 28-31). This compelling theory may become problematic in some contexts, as it works with primarily Eurocentric conceptions of nature and gender roles. Nevertheless, it offers a framework for thinking about nature and animals in our society, and draws attention to the gender and power aspects of the conceptions of animals and the relations to them.

The settling and transition to farming and agriculture also brought a new type of relationship with animals, as domestication led to greater control of and broader knowledge about the animal life cycles, which led to the loss of respect and worship of animals. Domestication in the sense of making living creatures property also became a model for other

types of social inequality among people, such as slavery etc. Mesopotamia represents a proponent of misothery, hatred to animals, as the animal was reduced to a symbol of human supremacy over nature. The gods became humanoid and the beasts were defeated. This position was later adopted by the Western religious tradition, including Christianity.

Ancient Greece offered diverse approaches to animals: Pythagoreans believed in transmigration of souls and interspecies reincarnation, which even led them to a vegetarian lifestyle (Gilhus 2009, 65). On the other hand, this was also the time when the differentiation between humans and animals deepened, as well as thinking in binary oppositions. Thus, Plato asserted a hierarchical view on people and animals, as he presented animals as lower, lacking reason. Armstrong designates this pattern of thinking about animals as 'anthropophoric', supporting, defining the human as a concept or category (in opposition to 'anthropoluotic', subverting these categorizations, dissolving the boundaries; see 2008, 11) — Plato's horses serving as bearers of human souls provide a good example. Similarly to Plato, Aristotle detached human from other living things as the only *animal rationale*, whilst the rest of animals are driven by instincts and passions. This conception was then adopted by Stoa, who created an abyss between the moral and rational human and the instinct-operated beast. Their belief that the purpose of animals is to serve humans was absorbed into Christian thought.

The Christian categorical separation of man and animal is well manifested in the Biblical creation story, where animals are created on one day, whereas men on the next one, as the 'crown' of the whole creation. Aleida Assmann depicts this world view in which there is a strong boundary dividing animals and humans, as a 'culture of identity' (*Kultur der Identität*), where any transitions between these categories are undesirable and not possible, and which stands in opposition to a 'culture of change' (*Kultur der Verwandlung*), where the boundaries are permeable and there is continuity between the two (Assmann and Assmann 2006, 31). The fear of hybridity and transitions through the human-animal boundary in Christianity can be illustrated by the figure of the devil, who is the only one capable of shapeshifting or appears as half human, half horned animal. By portraying the main antihero or evil this way, theriantrophy is presented as highly dangerous and negative phenomenon.

The view of René Descartes had a decisive influence on the perception of animals. This French philosopher promoted the concept of *bête-machine*, the animal machine. This intellectual conceptualization of animals also formed popular attitudes toward animals and can be traced even behind some contemporary forms of treatment of animals, therefore I elaborate it here shortly. Descartes explained this viewpoint thoroughly in his work *Discours de la méthode* (Descartes 1962). According to Cartesian doctrine, the laws of nature are identical to

the laws of mechanics. Furthermore, Descartes emphasized the dualism of mental and material, i.e. the independence of the soul from the body. He claimed that only man has (is) the soul — animals are not able to talk (in the sense of expressing their own ideas or sentiments), which means they do not think. Ergo, animals are mere machines, non conscious automata, even though highly elaborated (because created by God), and all their behavior can be explained in purely mechanistic terms. In its extreme form, the Cartesian conception of animals was interpreted in the way that animals are not able to feel anything, not even pain. This argument was used to justify practices like vivisection, which even Descartes himself performed. As Singer puts it: "*They experience neither pleasure nor pain, nor anything else. Although they may squeal when cut with a knife, or writhe in their efforts to escape contact with a hot iron, this does not, Descartes said, mean that they feel pain in these situations*" (Singer 1977, 208). Even though Singer speaks more from an activist position than from a the scholarly one, a similar testimony can be found in the memories of the Jansenist Nicolas Fontaine. Nevertheless, he does not describe practices of Descartes himself, but of his followers in Port-Royal (including Antoine Arnauld), who took animals for automatons not able to feel pain and treated dogs deliberately brutally, beat them indifferently and nailed them alive to examine their circulatory system: "*On disoit que s'étoit des horloges; que ces cris qu'elles faisoient, quand on les frappoit, n'étoient que le bruit d'un petit ressort qui avoit été remué, mais que tout cela étoit sans sentiment*"[1] (Fontaine 1738, 53).

A shift in perspective was brought by Darwin and his conception of evolution. Darwinists share the idea of quantitative, not qualitative differences between people and animals. By revealing the continuity between animals and humans, Darwin's theory of evolution not only meant a breakthrough in the sciences and was not limited to the academic field, but it disrupted the common worldview itself, when it stood against the basics of the 'culture of identity' (as mentioned above) and blurred the human-animal boundary by unveiling the existence of phenomena such as an evolutionary continuity and phylogenetic relationships. If we focus here solely on the popular interpretations and the ways darwinism expanded or possibly degraded in its common perception, apart from its expert development, this conception maintains a certain hierarchization as it often interprets the human as standing on the top of the evolutionary scale (and in certain interpretations it also led to the creation of racial theories, which applied a similar hierarchy to humans). Noske (1992, 227) also points out the similarity of Darwinism with the Cartesian mechanistic view as animals are portrayed here as passive outcomes of biological laws.

1 "They said that they were clocks; that these screams they did when struck were only the noise of a little spring that had been displaced, but all this happened without any sentiments."

2.1.1.1 Animals Set Paw in Modernity

The belief that there exists a strict boundary dividing humans from the non-human is deeply rooted in modernity. Man is the only bearer of culture and reason, the active agent, and on the other side of the border live the 'beasts' — in the chaotic domain of 'nature' and 'instinct'. The generic notion of 'the animal' has thus provided modernity with a term against which to define what is 'human' (Armstrong 2008, 1). But is our contemporary urban society really isolated from the nature? Or do we live in a world full of hybrid forms, unaware that the boundary that should separate 'our culture' from 'the nature' does not hold, and we are surrounded by hybrids and monsters (Latour 1993, 47)?

The contemporary human-animal relationship and the attitudes toward animals were influenced by a number of changes that took place in the course of the twentieth century. Franklin (2007, 49) defines four key themes formed already at the beginning of the century: the sentimentalization of animals, the state regulation of appropriate treatment of animals (e.g anti-cruelty laws), the demand for animal rights and the growing significance of animals in human leisure. During the first 70 years of the twentieth century, the attitudes to animals were linked with key economic and cultural changes, which Franklin (2007, 50) covers under the terms of modernity and Fordism. The project of modernity was lead with the subtext of human emancipation. As Franklin (2007, 53) notes, modernism is "*selfishly human in orientation, self-absorbed in its clear sense of human materiality and interest*". This means that from the Enlightenment onwards, the limitations on human control of nature were lowered or even rejected in favor of human progress, hence animal exploitation, experimentation or extinction of species were considered as the price to pay for the greater — human — good.

Ford then, through his conception and system of production, progressively adopted by other companies, by replacing horse-drawn carriages with cheap motorized transport removed the last of animals to be in close, visible relations of service to mainstream modern culture. Nevertheless, Fordism is a broader concept developed by early twentieth century social theorist Gramsci (cf. Antonio and Bonanno 2000, 33-36), based on Marxism and created to describe a new type of capitalism, which developed in the United States after World War I. This conception includes its economic, political as well as cultural dimensions, putting emphasis on rationalization of production and central role of finance capital, together with the increasingly significant role of mass culture, mass media, mass consumption, and the enlarged state (e.g. expanded regulation, planning, and propaganda). At the same time, it pays

attention to the increased interest in the moral and psychological condition of the workers. Gramsci claimed that the Fordist cultural project was linked to American Puritanism (especially its emphasis on monogamy, female subordination, and repressed sexuality), which nurtured the voluntary submission of workers to the labor discipline required by this new order. The resulting effects of Fordism were thus formation of mass markets and mass popular culture, as well as creation of an equilibrium of mass production and mass consumption available for most social classes. These changes had a wide-ranging set of consequences for human-animal relations. The consumption of meat grew considerably, however the whole process of slaughtering and butchery was removed from urban locations, rendering these practices invisible and reducing the livestock by rationalization and fragmentation of the production process to raw material. This progressive elimination of animals from public urban life is what Berger (2007) criticizes when speaking about disappearance and marginalization of animals.

On the other hand, the twentieth century also registered an opposite trend of attraction and curiosity about animals (Franklin 2007). The development of mass tourism and vogue of outdoor activities aroused an interest in the nature and the animals within it, leading to the establishment of national parks and wildlife reserves. Furthermore, pet-keeping became a mass activity. The increased interest in animals prompted the demand for mass media representations of animals. They became principal characters in cartoons and children's books, a source of entertainment in teen adventure stories, and cinema and television documentaries. Besides that, indigenous animals began to be widely used as symbols of nation and citizenship. This association of indigenous animals with nationalism led to further symbolic animal adoptions by national companies and corporations, multiplying animal representations. Over this period animals, mainly the wild ones, "*began as a source of excitement/sensation/entertainment, often quite removed or distant from the animals themselves*" (Franklin 2007, 59). Nevertheless, Berger argues that this raised interest in animals is only a confirmation of animal marginalization. He considers it as a symptom of disappearance of animals from everyday life: zoos, displaying animals in a theatrical decor, demonstrate for him how animals have become absolutely marginal, as well as realistic animal toys and their 'upgrade' in the form of urban pets, "*the new animal puppets*" (Berger 2007, 77), and the widespread commercial diffusion of animal imagery, substituting their rarely visible biological reproduction, makes animals more 'exotic' and remote (2007, 77). Berger thereby creates a hierarchization of animals, where only the wild animals, or those kept by people in the past for a practical purpose, are 'real', whilst pets, zoo animals etc. are somehow lacking and deficient

(2007, 71; for elaboration of this theme, see chapter 2.2.1).

Thus, the first 70 years of the twentieth century involved certain ambiguity and contradictory logics regarding the attitudes toward animals. The interest in nature led to the establishment of parks and wildlife reserves, where activities like birdwatching or animal observation were popular, but at the same time hunting and fishing became a mass masculine culture. Also, films, cartoons and novels were often used to broaden the popular support for sentimental attitudes, anti-hunting, conservation and protection. In general, most of the human-animal interactions in this period were anthropocentric in the sense that animals were often considered as serving for pleasure and entertainment of humans, their needs and leisure activities. Even the conservation efforts were formulated in terms of human consumption (as environmental protection is important to satisfy the human needs for a nature in which to play and enjoy leisure time).

2.1.1.2 Postmodernity: The Animal in a Post-Human World

In the 1970s, the collapse of a stable post-war economy, the questioning of the welfare state by right-wing politics and the rise of countercultures and social movements changed the cultural, political and economic setting as modernity and Fordism broke down, making way for postmodernity and post-Fordism. The human-animal relations transformed from "*sympathetic but instrumental, anthropocentric relations under Fordism to increasingly empathetic, decentred relationships in postmodernity*" (Franklin 2007, 50). Postmodern relations to animals can be characterized by three traits: stronger emotional and moral content, greater zoological range of involvement, and demand for more regulation and order (Franklin 2007, 50). Furthermore, human-animal relations were revealed to be politicized, meat eating declined considerably and the volume of pet-keeping grew. The therapeutic value of animals was discovered, pets (with the connotation of a plaything) became companions, and were drawn closer into human society, becoming quasi family members. Concerning wildlife activities, the rural leisure scene became a field of conflict and competition between rival groups, both trying to set rules and regulations on the pursued activities.

Franklin argues that under postmodernity, it became increasingly difficult to identify clear, morally imperative relationships among people, so that humans extended their social and emotional ties with animals, whether as companions, managed wild populations or those involved in food production — who enabled humans to engage in morally good acts (2007, 50). He founds his theory on the notion of ontological insecurity, adopted from Giddens, who

develops this concept in his work *Modernity and Self-identity*, 1991, which, together with misanthropy and risk-reflexivity, create the conditions for nature and animals to become objects for the transference of human emotions (Franklin 2007, 72-77). Ontological insecurity refers to a sense of confusion, loss of continuity, unpredictability, and anxiety due to the blurred nature of postmodernity and its lack of clear direction or plan, a general sense of distaste for government and bureaucracy and the privatism and social isolation of individuals in the so-called 'West'. Applied to human-animal relations, this means that the undergoing fragmentation of family and domestic organization, decline of local community and stretching of social networks over larger spaces, creating more shallow and less enduring forms of sociability among humans, led to a re-composition of social identities around new objects, and animals became substitute love objects and companions, as they could be involved in enduring relations of mutual dependency. Pet-keeping thus turned into an extension of familial relations to non-humans, but the increased familiarity and interaction concerned 'wild' animals likewise, in activities such as bird feeding in winter or helping frogs to cross roads. Concerning postmodern misanthropy, this term denotes a general antipathy to humanity as a species out of control, and animals should have created a moral counterbalance in their essential goodness and sanity. The notion of risk-reflexivity refers to the global situation when all wild areas were brought under human control and no areas beyond men were left. Franklin goes even to proclaim that "*there is no wilderness or perhaps no nature since everything everywhere is subject to human control*" (2007, 77). That implies the conviction that animals have become a human moral responsibility:

> Animals provide a clear, unambiguous feel-good factor in people's lives and an object for human responsibility. In part then, change in the twentieth century can be understood as the normative extension of moral debates onto the parallel community of animals, but there is also a keen sense that the boundary separating the human from the animal was finally being eroded. (Franklin 2007, 51)

This takes us to another important feature of the human-animal relationship. Whereas the more radical wing of animal activists first collapsed the distinction between humans and animals arguing for moral equivalence only to restore the distinction by demanding complete separation of animals from humanity (in the sense of the aforementioned misanthropy), a more general trend shows, as mentioned earlier, more empathetic patterns, of a companionate, protective human-animal relationship, implying what Franklin calls 'species multi-culturalism' (Franklin 2001, 132), which is a hybrid of zoocentrism of strict animal

rights and anthropocentric privileging of the human, creating a politics of sentimentalization, reconciliation, and mutual discovery. This approach then allows for an extension of moral subjecthood to animals, which implies that the social is not restricted purely to the human (Franklin 2001, 133). This contributes to blurring the boundary of modernity between humans and non-humans. It is an extension of Latour's (1993) idea of hybridity of nature-culture. Latour criticizes what he designates as the 'Great Divide' of modern 'Western' thinking between what counts as human and as non-human, as nature and as society — these artificial constructed binaries that are the product of modern thought. He claims that human cultures are not categorically separate or even separable from the natural world but are intertwined and mixed-up in a network of historical processes and cultural artifacts, linked together by scientific theories and knowledge, and political and power relations implied in their application in practice.

Baker (2000) describes this postmodern sensibility using two characteristics: questioning of modern certainties about the value of science, rationality and progress, and on the other hand a more holistic, complex view of the world, replacing the earlier Cartesian dualism, leading to an ecological awareness and a raised consciousness about the interdependence of humans and animals. He argues that "*the classic dualism of human and animal is not so much erased as* rendered uninteresting *as a way of thinking about being in the world*" (2000, 17). Historically, two stages of postmodernism can be distinguished: whereas the first stage was, on the intellectual level, interested in fragmentation of texts and bodies, often adopting an ironic or parodic form, the second and more constructive one was searching to rethink human beings and readdress the world, in order to newly imagine differently reconstituted communities and selves (Baker 2000, 24-25). Some scholars even talk about post-human condition in relation to postmodernity, to refer to "*a period after Humanism in which humans can no longer be regarded as unique, distinct from or superior to the world around them*" (Pepperell 2012), where a rethinking of the concept of the human is necessary — and with it of course also the 'non-human' changes. In his *Posthuman Manifesto*, Pepperell calls into question anthropocentric beliefs of human exceptionality and predominance, refusing the division between humans and their surroundings. Distinctions made to separate the human from nature, he argues, merely reflect the cultural contexts and prejudices of the societies which maintain them (see Pepperell's website *The Posthuman Condition*, 2012).

2.1.2 Non-humans in Social and Cultural Anthropology

It is indeed possible to trace animals within the anthropological works throughout the history of anthropology. Nevertheless, the role of these animals was commonly not of central interest. They served rather as a "*vehicle with which to explore a particular social formation or process*" (Mullin 2002, 388) or, in other words, animals were featured in anthropology mostly as passive objects "*that are acted upon and thought and felt about*" (Noske 1992, 228), that is to say maintaining the anthropocentric focus of social sciences. The human-animal relationship was regarded as being one-way. This is the case of the works of many classic ethnographers such as Evans-Pritchard (*The Nuer*, 1950) or van Gennep (*Tabou et Totémisme à Madagascar*, 1904) and others.

Lévi-Strauss explored the role of animals in traditional societies through their beliefs and myths as well as their eating habits and practices. The animal, as it stands in various practices and representations, constitutes a bearer of meaning, sentiments and values, not only a natural stimulus, a biological object that can be easily reduced to material or meat. Using the example of totemism, he showed that animals are not only 'good to eat' (*bon à manger*), but primarily 'good to think' (*bon à penser*): "*their perceptible reality permits the embodiment of ideas and relations conceived by speculative thought on the basis of empirical observations*" (Lévi-Strauss 1999, 89). Also Geertz employed animals in his works, using them as a 'metasocial commentary' (2000, 495) on certain social phenomena. He thereby created an influential analysis of Balinese culture and society through the interpretation of cockfights as a text commenting on local status hierarchies.

As we can also see in the above mentioned cases, the animals present in anthropology were considered, to rephrase Lévi-Strauss' famous notion, "*bon à penser mais non à observer*" (Piette 2002, n.p.)[2]. It was in the 1980s that studies dealing directly with the human-animal relationship started to appear in a larger volume (Gibas, Pauknerová, Stella 2011, 16). The main enterprise of the developing human-animal studies was to "*find ways of understanding animals and human-animal relations that are not constrained by traditional disciplinary boundaries and methods*" (DeMello 2010, 3). Social and cultural anthropology, which has undergone profound internal changes and reorganization in the 1980s after what is called a 'crisis of representation' (Denzin and Lincoln 2005, 18)[3], can offer this much-needed interdisciplinary perspective.

2 "good to think but not to observe".

3 The crisis of representation made the ethnographic research and writing more reflexive and also brought into question notions of gender, race or class of the authors themselves. The fundamental works for this period were Clifford's and Marcus' *Writing Culture* (1986) or Marcus' and Fisher's *Anthropology as Cultural*

George Marcus (2008) describes these changes as a diversion from the traditional four-field organization of anthropology (i.e. cultural, linguistic, physical and archeology) towards interdisciplinary appropriations of the concerns of the social sciences, finding new terrains of research. He argues that today, the strength and vitality of anthropology lies precisely in its diverse interdisciplinary involvements — and that is what makes the relationship of anthropology and Animal Studies so challenging (Mullin 2002, 387).

In the beginning of 1990s, Dutch cultural anthropologist Barbara Noske made a call for a proper 'anthropology of animals', criticizing the fact that social sciences generally confine themselves exclusively to human subjects. She rejects the aforementioned use of animals as "*raw material for human acts, thoughts, and feelings*" (1992, 228) and calls for a treatment of the animal as the Other, where anthropologists have to be aware not only of ethnocentrism, but of an anthropocentric approach as well. Among others, Noske draws upon Donna Haraway, who asserted to cease depicting non-humans as passive objects of human agency, and to recognize them as possible agents on their own, as active meaning-generating actors who are not only the object of our gaze, but who respond and look back (Haraway 2007, 23). Kirksey and Helmreich (2010) promote the term *multispecies ethnography*, which they define as a new mode of research and genre of writing within anthropology, where creatures previously appearing on the margins of anthropology acquire their own biographical and political life (2010, 545).

American cultural anthropologist Molly Mullin, who examines sociocultural studies of human-animal relationships, points to certain significant changes happening in the field (2002, 388-390). More contemporary anthropological works on animals and human-animal relationship tend to reject the material/conceptual divide and consider the animal in a more complex way, exploring the linkages between these material or economic and semiotic aspects of animals or human-animal relationships. And even though Mullin concludes that sociocultural research on human-animal relationships continues to be more about humans than animals, she adds that there is a change in that "*recent anthropological inquiry is often more willing to engage, albeit cautiously, moral and political questions regarding animals*" (2002, 390), and human-animal relationships are more often considered a worthy focus in themselves. The contribution of anthropology to Human-Animal Studies also lies in its capacity of reflexivity and awareness about ethnocentrism:

Critique (1986). A decade later came the so-called *triple crisis* (crisis of representation, legitimation and praxis), influenced by discourses of poststructuralism and postmodernism.

> Anthropological work in general is apt to emphasize the historical, contextual specificity of any particular human-animal relationship and of how categories, including those of "human" and "animal," are not inevitable or universal but shaped in particular contexts and in different ways by actors with often conflicting perspectives and interests. (Mullin 2002, 390)

Yet, the degree to which anthropologists are motivated by a concern for animals can considerably vary. Also, the more focused attention to animals is not incompatible with asking questions about other matters, such as concern with interhuman relationships or those of humans and their environments (Mullin 2002, 388).

Thus, how should we treat animals within social sciences? Anthropologist Albert Piette (2002) distinguishes five approaches toward the animal or its analytical status: The first one is the approach typical for zoological disciplines such as animal ethology or animal psychology. Focused exclusively on the animal, the objective of this approach is to recognize the behavioral and cognitive schemes, which are pertinent for their adaptive function in a specific ecosystem. The second approach is based on a sociological analysis of social relations, systems of practices and representations associated with an animal. However, this animal does not appear as an actor *an sich* but the social practices and representations associated to it are studied, as well as the related ritualized activities. According to the third approach, the animal is seen as a sign, a symbol or a metaphor for cultural values or representations. Again, the animal itself is not of such interest for the scholar as the surrounding practices, which reflect the given culture or society. The fourth approach treats the animal as a statistical variable, which is compared with other units such as the economic or cultural capital of the involved human person. Whereas in the first mode the animal is observed in the manner of a purely natural object, independent from humans, the three following approaches relocate the analysis toward the human social relations. Hence, Piette proposes a fifth approach connecting the interest in human practices and in the animal itself as well, conceptualizing the animal as a "*fait socio-animal*" (2002, n.p.), a socio-animal fact. This means the animal is a constructed social entity, a result of a network consisting of variously associated and interacting elements. Within this socio-animal fact, we find humans, objects, legal and ethical norms, etc. and the animal itself with its genetic, physiological or cognitive characteristics, and the diverse relations between them and their mutual interactions. In the present work, I decided to draw upon this last approach, as I look at animals in the broader social context, seeking to pay attention to the representations that cover the animal as well as to the animal itself.

2.2 What Are We Looking at?

The second part of the present chapter moves its focus to those standing vis-à-vis the lens of our camera (whether illusory or not) — who and what is this 'animal' we are looking at? At first glance, the answer may seem simple and straightforward: the living creature one sees can be associated with the zoological denomination we use to designate the given species. But is this way sufficient or exhaustive? "*The owls are not what they seem*," as it is said in David Lynch's series *Twin Peaks*, and we can apply this to other creatures as well: what one understands as (zoo) animals can take different forms and meanings. I argue that the animal can be seen as the anthropological Other. Furthermore, I try to define the animal living in a zoological garden, and — as the representation is an important and inseparable part of the animal — the problem of representations and some basic theories will also be discussed.

On a more theoretical level, postmodern thinking about animals is concerned with the ways how relations to the non-human world are historically mediated, and focuses on cultural constructions and classifications of animals in order to make them meaningful to humans (Baker 2000, 9). Deleuze and Guattari categorize animals into three groups: wild and independent, 'demonic animals', operating in packs and at the greatest distance from humans, 'classification' or 'state animals', with fixed symbolical meanings serving human interests, and finally 'individuated animals', family pets, perceived negatively as they elicit sensibilities and sentimentalization (Baker 2000, 168). However, the more 'traditional' classification systems are neither universal or objective, as Foucault points out, drawing upon the well-known quote from Borges describing a bizarre taxonomy of animals from 'a certain Chinese encyclopedia'[4]. All classification systems possess political and economic dimensions, and "*in every culture, between the use of what one might call the ordering codes and reflections upon order itself, there is the pure experience of order and of its modes of being*" (Foucault 2005, xxiii). Classification systems are a product of the ways in which language is used, how natural creatures are perceived and grouped together, and how the culture has made manifest the existence of order, so the positive basis of knowledge can be created as we find it employed in natural history and biology. Mullin indicates that both scientific and vernacular classifications present constructed systems of identities and differences that have been contested and transformed, and they raise questions about whose purposes they may have served and how they relate to systems of power and inequality (1999, 212). These classifications reflect not only 'scientific' concerns, but also those about national identity, class, gender, race etc., helping to build "*our age-old*

4 A taxonomy including such categories as animals belonging to the Emperor alongside tame, fabulous or drawn with a very fine camelhair brush. See Foucault 2005, xvi.

distinction between the Same and the Other" (Foucault 2005, xvi).

Indeed, animals sometimes adopt the role of the Other. In order to see how the wild animal is being conceptualized in modern complex urban societies it is important to recognize that "*for urban individuals the wild animal is the very embodiment of 'otherness'. It is both 'outside' human society, and 'inside' human culture, in the sense that human cultures recognize, categorize and describe such beings*" (Beardsworth and Bryman 2001, 85). The conception of the Other refers to the phenomenon of learning one's own identity through contrast: it is through the Other that we construct the 'Self'. Originally set in psychology and philosophy, the Other became an important term within postcolonial studies, depicting the relationship between the colonizer and the colonized. This relationship is defined by appropriation, that is the interpretation of the experiences of the colonized by the dominant group, which generates and sustains a particular representation of this Other. It is thus based on a power relation where the identity of the subject is formed through the gaze of the ones in a position of superiority:

> This gaze corresponds to the 'gaze of the *grand-autre*' within which the identification, objectification and subjection of the subject are simultaneously enacted: the imperial gaze defines the identity of the subject, objectifies it within the identifying system of power relations and confirms its subalterneity and powerlessness. (Ashcroft, Griffiths, Tiffin 2013, 253)

The Other is stereotyped through this gaze and in the process of generating and transmitting knowledge from the position of power, a homogenized, standardized Other is constructed, different and often seen as mysterious and exotic. The characteristic features of the colonizer/colonized relationship can be replicated onto the relation between human and nature, or perhaps animals. Sachs points out that in a way, nature can be considered 'the ultimate Other' (2003, 119), considering the interconnectedness of the domination of nature and the domination of some people by others. Making nature legible and knowable can easily lead to further imposing of power and dominance. This is also manifested in the aforementioned classification systems:

> the practice of applying Linnaean nomenclature to elements of the natural world was both "transformative" and "appropriative," because Enlightenment botanists self-consciously sought to impose a logical, human order on a world that they perceived as utterly "other" and chaotic. (Sachs 2003, 119)

Haraway defines the principal Others to Man within 'Western' cultures, created under the latourian Great Divide between what is perceived as nature and as society, or as human and as non-human, as "*gods, machines, animals, monsters, creepy crawlies, women, servants and slaves, and noncitizens in general*" (2007, 9-10). She argues for reflexivity and rejection of the boundaries arising from this manner of thought: "*the discursive tie between the colonized, the enslaved, the noncitizen, and the animal—all reduced to type, all Others to rational man, and all essential to his bright constitution—is at the heart of racism and flourishes, lethally, in the entrails of humanism*" (Haraway 2007, 18). Haraway then proposes the term 'companion species' (2007, 16-18), which rejects the hierarchization, and is more of a pointer to an ongoing 'becoming with', where humans and non-humans are partners created in interaction, through encounter.

Within the conception of the Other, there is also a romanticized imagery of exoticism to be found. Through this lens, the "*romantic image of the wild animal, anthropomorphically epitomizing creativity, independent-mindedness and 'outsider' status, it is clear that the domesticated animal just won't do as the chosen image of the artist or philosopher, regardless of their sympathies for animals as such*" (Baker 2000, 170). In the following chapter, I thus examine the classification of animals into the categories of wild and domesticated, and aim to find the place of the zoo animal within it.

2.2.1 Wild Animals, Zoo Animals

Berger (2007) claims that zoos cannot but disappoint: there is no real encounter with the animal, no look between animal and man. The animals in a zoo appear to the visitor to be unexpectedly lethargic and dull (2007, 75), they are distant from the animal as seen in photographs or in documentaries, and thus do not arouse much interest: "*The scientific or environmental messages relayed at zoos and other encounter sites struggle for attention against this flood* [...] *of commercial representations of wild animals and nature (in television advertisement etc.), which overwhelm our interactions with material wild animals*" (Bulbeck 2010, 83). Because the animals in zoos appear to be mostly passive and boring, zoos offer substitute forms and ways of entertainment. In order to be visitor-friendly, passive animals or those species which prefer privacy are encouraged to remain visible (Silva 2005, 131). Very often there are for example commented feeding-time sessions for otherwise motionless animals. Hence, Prague zoo also offers special programs to the visitors, which interconnect the educational and entertaining function, from guided visits through direct contact with selected animals or the possibility to work as a zoo keeper for one day to organization of weddings inside the zoo — the proportion of education and

entertainment of the programs varies significantly.

As Bulbeck notes, the form and function of the performances has also changed through history: "*Instead of chimpanzee tea parties and elephant rides, animal "shows" are now based on scientific knowledge to display animals' "natural" behaviors*" (2010, 85). But is it possible to observe any 'natural' behavior of animals in the zoos, which would be comparable to the behavior of animals living in the wild? Against the viewpoint of zoos, Lee (2005) provocatively states that zoo animals cannot be considered individuals of a wild species. She labels them *immurated* animals – a unique kind of animal, which can be only found in zoos. Even though these animals look like the wild ones they are not wild, and, necessarily, they do not behave like those living in the wild. This assertion has strong implications for the roles of the zoo:

> to admit this logic would entail that the only sound theoretical justification of zoos lies in recreation, and not in the more high-minded mission of education-for-conservation of wild animals, or of ex situ conservation, tasks which zoos necessarily cannot accomplish, as an ontological dissonance exists between, on the one hand, the immurated animals and their behaviour on view as exhibits, and on the other, the mistaken belief, on the part of zoos, that by looking at such exhibits, visitors would actually be learning about wild animals, their behaviour in the wild and the need to save them and their habitats in the wild. (Lee 2005, 2)

Lee's arguments lead to a radical conclusion that the life of zoo animals bears no resemblance to the lives of those in the wild. The crucial aspects that create this gap are miniaturization of simulated space, 'hotelification', referring to preparation and serving of food instead of hunting or foraging, and medication, which prevents suffering and diseases of animals but also prolongs the life of the animals under zoo management compared to the wild ones (Lee 2005, 42). Even though this point of view may seem quite radical, it encourages rethinking the hybrid nature of animal inhabitants of zoos.

One can see a similar line of thought in Berger's popular claim from his essay *Why Look At Animals?* that "*the zoo to which people go to meet animals, to observe them, to see them, is, in fact, a monument to the impossibility of such encounters*" (2007, 74). Berger thus presents his quite radical conviction about an inherent inauthenticity of urban experience. He conceives contemporary urban culture as a space where the animal is reduced, typically 'co-opted' into relations of family (pets, Disney's animal production) or spectacle (zoos, wildlife photography). There is thus, as also Baker points out, a worrying implication that the urban animal (pet and zoo animal as well) is "*somehow inherently less worthy than the wild animal or the field animal*" (2001, 14).

As mentioned earlier, Berger criticizes the undergoing marginalization of animals, but at the same time he denies some of them proper existence, considering them not 'real' enough. The arguments of Lee and Berger draw attention to the specific nature of animals living in close relations with humans, acknowledging their difference from their 'wild' counterparts. However, the biased presupposition that these animals are not genuine creatures, disqualifying them from observation or even consideration, should be eliminated. Even if we accept the assumption that there is only a faint overlap to meet or learn about a species of wild animal within a zoo, it does not mean that the animals inhabiting zoos are not real, not worth our gaze or any attention.

Domesticated animals are ascribed ambiguous status as they exist both inside and outside human society. Baker designates this ambiguity as the "*fear of the familiar*" (2000, 189), where one cannot establish a proper distance, as these animals create an intermediate category. Similarly, zoo animals also escape the clear modern demarcations, occupying a liminal place between wild and domesticated. As showed earlier, dichotomies created between nature and culture, wilderness and society, do not hold, and thus, it is preposterous to perceive animals as belonging exclusively to the nature or the 'wild'. However, this liminal status implies that these animals should be seen as unique and distinct and their specific nature needs to be recognized and examined further.

Besides the issue of the nature of animals kept in zoos, another question arises concerning what exactly the visitor looks at, or, more generally, comes into contact with when confronted with the zoo animal. Beardsworth and Bryman (2001) distinguish four basic modes of engagement through which human members of modern urban societies can experience the "wild animal". The first and most direct mode is the *encounter*, when the animal is physically present and the individual faces this unrestrained animal in its own environment. Unlike the experience of hunters or agriculturalists, these encounters are rare for urban people unless they seek them actively — for example through birdwatching or on safaris (even though it is questionable to what extent the encounters in tourist safaris are authentic). The second, mediated mode is the figurative *representation* of the animal, whether realistic, anthropomorphic, artistic or symbolic (the meaning of representations is more thoroughly discussed in the following chapter, 2.2.2). The third mode, designated as *presentation*, is — as the encounter — direct; nevertheless, the animal is held captive and it is intentionally presented by its captors for viewing. Finally, for the fourth mode, the authors use the term *quasification*. This concept serves to denote a specific subtype of representation, where the observed objects are fake while the recipient or beholder is aware of their artificiality and

thereby he can appreciate the scope of the artifice and skill. As Baker notes, "*viewers are moved, even as they see that they are being manipulated. It is as though the artists* [or even the zoo exhibitors] *are offering, ingenuously, the raw materials from which their viewers might care to spin out a meaning*" (2000, 7). Thus, the mode most typical for zoological gardens is presentation, although the visitor is increasingly exposed to representations and quasifications as well.

2.2.2 Representations

In the previous chapter I argued that visitors can meet the zoo animal under different forms: as presentations, representations or its specific subtype, quasifications (as the actual direct encounter is not possible in such an environment). I find it necessary to pursue here the question of representations in more detail. In the first part, I explore the theoretical backgrounds to continue with what can be understood by the term of animal representations.

2.2.2.1 Theories of Representation

Representation can be defined as "*imagery that re-presents, through the lens of looking, something that's already familiar*" (Matthews 2001, 1). For Stuart Hall, representation is the production of meaning through language, an expression of the relation between concepts and language which "*enables us to* refer *to either the 'real' world of objects, people or events, or indeed to imaginary worlds of fictional objects, people and events*" (2003, 17). Language is understood inclusively here, in its broader sense, as an expression of meaning through different sorts of signs, such as written words, spoken sounds or visual images. Another important point Hall makes is that representations are not a kind of neutral or 'objective' reflections of reality: "*there is not a simple relationship of reflection, imitation or one-to-one correspondence between language and the real world*" (2003, 28). Representations can refer to imaginary things or abstract ideas, and the world is not accurately reflected in language as in a mirror.

Hall employs the constructionist approach to the theory of representation, which recognizes the public, social character of language. This means that it is neither the things in themselves nor the individuals using language that can create and fix the meaning. Things do not just 'mean' by themselves — meaning is not some inherent quality of things. It is *constructed* through the use of representational systems such as concepts and signs:

> it is not the material world which conveys meaning: it is the language system or whatever system we are using to represent our concepts. It is social actors who use the conceptual systems of their culture and the linguistic and other representational systems to construct meaning, to make the world meaningful and to communicate about that world meaningfully to others. (Hall 2003, 25)

Hall then distinguishes two systems of representation, through which the meaning is produced: system of mental representations, concepts formed in the mind that classify and organize the world into meaningful categories; and language, a network of signs that enable us to communicate the meaning (2003, 28). In order to translate our concepts into language or vice versa, we need codes. These codes are the result of social conventions and present a crucial part of culture, creating shared maps of meaning, learned and internalized by individuals as they become members of a given culture. Consequently, this implies that the meaning is never completely fixed or final (or 'true'), but it changes from one culture or historical period to another (Hall 2003, 29). Hence, representation is a process, a practice by which members of a culture use language, understood generally as a signifying system, to produce meaning through the use of codes.

As has been noted, representations are not direct or unambiguous captures of reality. When we say they *produce* meaning, it means they are capable to actively construct reality. Nevertheless, in many media representations commonly function, as Kappeler (1986, 2) points out, under the pretext of realism: the aim of medial use of representations is to naturalize them, to perceive them as transparent reflections of reality. Yet they can be "*more 'real' than the reality they are said to represent or reflect*" (Kappeler 1986, 3). Hence, "*representations are not just a matter of mirrors, reflections, key-holes. Somebody is making them, and somebody is looking at them, through a complex array of means and conventions*" (Kappeler 1986, 3). If one is even willing to accept the mirror metaphor, it is necessary to problematize this concept in the manner of questioning who is holding this mirror, at what angle and for whose benefits. Besides the actual content, the agents — author and perceiver — present the crucial factors of a representation. They can alter the representation's meaning depending on their political (question of class, race, gender), cultural (relationship of representations to a generalized concept of culture and reality) and economic context (relationships of cultural production and exchange) (Kappeler 1986, 3). This means that there is always a certain author and an audience, and the representation carries a certain structure, a set of elements able to guide or govern the relationship between the viewer and the image (Matthews 2001, 1). If a person (human or non-human) is represented, a specific kind of relationship is formed as those placed within

the representation as content become an image, which leads to their objectification (this problem is discussed further in the following chapter when speaking about the gaze, see 2.3.1). Foucault perceives representation as a source for the production of social knowledge (Hall 2003, 42) through discourse. Thus, representation is connected with social practices as well as questions of power.

2.2.2.2 Animal Representations

The phenomenon of animal representations deserves to be scrutinized more thoroughly. Not only in the zoo but also in everyday life are we surrounded by animals in the form of representation. For an urban individual, the most common encounter with an animal is through its images in the media, publicity or in logotypes, in the form of toys, as anthropomorphic comic book heroes or as national symbols. The primary mode of engagement with the wild is thus, as Beardsworth and Bryman conclude, "*through highly processed (and skillfully edited) electronically mediated representations of real or 'virtual' animals*" (2001, 86). The exception is, of course, a narrow group of animals such as dogs, cats or pigeons, which one can meet in the non-mediated form, as living non-human persons. However, this does not mean that the symbolic animal is less real than the biological form:

> when we talk about "an animal", we usually have *two of them* on mind and sometimes they are hard to differentiate – one is the living "inner animal", a living, animated body, and the other one is the outer, the semiotic, symbolic animal, a coat of representations and meanings "on the surface" or "interface" of the living animal. (Gibas, Pauknerová, Stella 2011, 16)

Furthermore, the symbolic animals can sometimes live completely apart from a living body, and reproduce culturally, and at the same time they can be as vital as their biological counterparts (Gibas, Pauknerová, Stella 2011, 16), as unicorns and dragons, or some can 'parasite' on their living template, as the evil supershark from *Jaws* or Mickey Mouse. It is important to remark that there exist interactions between animals and their representations, hence the portrayals or representations of animals can directly influence the ways people behave toward them (Gibas, Pauknerová, Stella 2011, 15).[5]

Thus, the boundary between humans and animals becomes once again blurred as it is

5 See Nigel Rothfels' Introduction to *Representing animals*, where the author examines the connections between the imagining of animals and the cultural environment using the example of the film *Jaws* (2002b).

impossible to divide and separate these layers. An animal as we recognize it is always a combination or hybrid of the 'inner animal', the living creature, and the representations it carries on itself. Baker suggests that "*the animal could only be considered, and understood, through its representations. There was no unmediated access to the "real" animal*" (2001, xvi). It is never seen naked from the coat of representations, but an animal as we recognize it is already a result of interpretation, culturally reshaped and evaluated (Gibas, Pauknerová, Stella 2011, 17). In a similar line of arguments, Armstrong (2008, 2-3) draws attention to the fact that if one wants to study an animal in its complexity, he or she cannot focus solely on this outer cultural layer either. It is necessary to "*go beyond the use of animals as mere mirrors for human meaning*" (Armstrong 2008, 3) and not to rely completely on their representations, as it makes of animals nothing more than passive surfaces onto which humans inscribe meanings, imaginings and orderings. Thus, besides the meaning of representations, we should give attention to the practices within the making of them, and scrutinize the roles animals themselves perform in these practices. This third element includes the study of the ways cultural formations are affected by the materiality of animals as well as the relationship of animals with humans. This way, animals do not fall into the trap of passive objects but act as agents (and can even destabilize or transgress the human orderings).

2.3 How to Look at Animals?

Having outlined the reasons to look at or to study animals as anthropologists, and what these animals are that are the subject of our gaze, I continue with the question how we should or how we do look at them, as our gaze is never neutral. For this reason, the following chapter treats the problem of the visual and the gaze. According to some scholars, visuality became the dominating sense in modern societies (Urry 2011, 155). Today, as also Rose points out, we "*live in a world where knowledge as well as many forms of entertainment are visually constructed*" (2001, 1) — and the space of zoological gardens creates a place par excellence where knowledge and entertainment intermingle through visual sources and materials. Furthermore, the visual element is fundamental for social and cultural anthropology, as participant observation presents its basic research method.

The ways in which we see animals also determine what we see — as well as the viewers themselves. As Mason puts it, "*our lifeways—particularly our economic relationships with animals—determine our ways of seeing animals. Our ways of seeing animals have, in turn, much to do with our worldview, which includes views of nature, the supernatural/divine, and—it must be emphasized—*

ourselves in it all" (2007, 17). With the ways of looking and seeing, as well as their context and construction, the conception of the gaze is profoundly connected.

2.3.1 The Gaze

The zoological garden is a place of the gaze: visitors come here primarily in order to gain a visual experience ("*Let's go look at* [*tigers/cockroaches etc.*]" was one of the most heard phrases in the Prague zoo when people planned where to go next). The gaze refers to a learned ability, different from simply seeing as a result of functioning of the eye, and does not reflect some pre-existing, given reality stretching in front of the beholder. What the gaze makes visible is constructed — linguistically as much as visually. Gaze thus refers to "*the 'discursive determinations', of socially constructed seeing or 'scopic regimes'*" (Urry and Larsen 2011, 2), and it is formed and influenced by social and historical context, and power relations of looking as well. Thus, the gaze is a performance by which people perceive the world through a particular filter of ideas, skills, desires and expectations, and which is socio-culturally framed by social class, gender, nationality, age etc. (Urry and Larsen 2011, 2).

When looking at animals, the 'human gaze' is involved, which can be seen as parallel to the 'male gaze'. The latter is a notion introduced by feminist theorists in visual studies to draw attention to the gender asymmetry involved in visual media. The concept of male gaze is used to designate the ways in which visual media, such as film, printed magazines, advertisements etc. create and display women as objects seen from the perspective of the white heterosexual male: "*women are thus seen as passive objects of male scrutiny through the process of representation*" (Beardsworth and Bryman 2001, 89). Furthermore, this male gaze is maintained through the fact that it has established itself as the generic human gaze, and thus considered as objective and all-encompassing (Beardsworth and Bryman 2001, 89). The human gaze is analogical to the one of the male as they both express dominance through the subject-object relationship and thus present the "*empowered gaze*" (Baker 2000, 15), which creates the objectification of the (animal) model through looking. Animals are those who are observed, becoming objects of our (human) gaze and knowledge. This 'species asymmetry' is also what Berger criticizes when he speaks about the one-sidedness of the practice of looking at animals in zoos, as the animals in there do not return the gaze: "*at the most, the animal's gaze flickers and passes on. They look sideways. They look blindly beyond. They scan mechanically. They have been immunised to encounter, because nothing can any more occupy a central place in their attention*" (Berger 2007, 77)[6]. The problem

6 Nevertheless, Berger's conviction is at least in opposition to my personal experience from Vienna zoo,

here is, as Baker points out, that the practice of looking is at the heart of both our sympathy for and our oppression of the animal, and this implies that "*only by understanding who has power over the image can we begin to elaborate a worthwhile cultural history of the animal*" (2000, 15).

Postcolonial studies largely contributed to the reflection of the ways of looking and the gaze and their social or political connotations. Art historian Mieke Bal in her critique of the colonial visual practice creates a set of rules which are related to the responsibility of looking:

> Rule number one: you must put yourself in the exact same situation as the person [in the case of our study, even a non-human person] you are looking at, so that looking becomes an exchange of looks. Second rule: looking is voluntary, accepted by both parties. Third rule: permission to look does not entail permission to do anything else, like touching, appropriating, taking with you, exploiting. Fourth rule: you reflect on what this experience means to you, if you like it, and why. (Bal 1991)

Beardsworth and Bryman (2001, 83) see a particular significance of the zoo in the fact that it represents an intersection of the 'zoological' and the 'tourist gaze', representing the scientific and the recreational component of the zoo institution. These two terms were introduced by Franklin and Urry respectively. Franklin describes the zoological gaze as the manner in which viewing animals has been organized socially over time (1999, 7), presenting both the ways of looking at, as well as making meaning out of, human relations to animals. He argues that animals always convey meanings and values that are culturally specific and thus the zoological gaze is always mediated by culture, adding that zoos and the changes that occurred within them over the time offer an opportunity par excellence to analyze the shifting social constructions of the zoological gaze. This is due also to the fact that "*in most Western nations the demand to see and gaze at [animals] has grown significantly over the past two hundred years, and particularly since the advent of mass leisures, mass transport, publishing and the visual media*" (Franklin 1999, 62). As the gaze is also historically specific, it is possible to observe its transformations in the design of zoos: the shift from small barred cages to imitations of ecosystems correspond with the shift from a human-centered interest to a more decentered, ecologistic and zoocentric gaze (Franklin 1999, 78). The zoological gaze can also be understood as a subtype of the scientific gaze, where animals become objects of analysis in the discourses of biological disciplines.

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where, as a child, I encountered the look of a tiger, and fascinated by him, I maintained the gaze until he jumped at the glass wall I was standing directly behind, which made me realize his living presence quite well, and I also understood that he noticed mine, too.

Indeed, zoological gardens are presented as tourist destinations and attractions. This conception influences the functions a zoo fulfills — given the fact that tourists have specific demands, different from those of biologists, for example. Thus, the tourist gaze is being engaged as well, which stands for "*the way in which many leisure activities which are separated from the mundane settings of home and work, are shaped and framed by the act of* looking" (Beardsworth and Bryman 2001, 89). The tourist gaze is constructed through difference, in relation and in opposition to non-tourist forms of social experience and consciousness. It has a mass character and is directed towards those features of landscape or townscape which are separate from everyday experience, creating a situation of greater sensitivity to visual elements. The tourist gaze is very often visually objectified through photographs, films, models etc., which enables the gaze to be endlessly reproduced and recaptured (Urry 2011, 4). Tourism in general creates a particular combination of the visual, the aesthetic, the commercial and the popular, and very often involves spectacle — hence the importance of the visual and the gaze. Tourism is generally based on popular pleasures, anti-elitism, audience participation and emphasis on kitsch (Urry 2011, 100), features that can also be found in zoos. Equally important is Urry's definition of the post-tourist, as someone who seeks instant pleasures in the artifices created for his or her delectation (Beardsworth and Bryman 2001, 84), a phenomenon which is, within zoos, embodied in the quasifications (see 2.2.1).

3 About Zoological Gardens

3.1 Zoo History

Zoological gardens represent important social and cultural institutions. They materialize the relationship between humans and non-human animals. According to Benbow's functionalist definition, zoos serve to display and maintain living animals (2004, 379). Thus, using this broader interpretation of the concept, its earliest forms can be traced back to the ancient civilizations of Egypt, Mesopotamia or Rome where keeping wild animals in captivity was already common. In the Middle Ages the tradition of the so-called lion houses developed in aristocratic circles, the vogue of menageries and cabinets of curiosities (exposing living as well as dead animals) emerged in the 16th and 17th centuries. The direct predecessor of modern zoological gardens was the royal menagerie in Versailles, which was transferred after the French Revolution to the Parisian *Jardin des Plantes* and where animals and their behavior were studied scientifically. The first modern public zoological garden was founded in Schönbrunn by empress Maria Theresia.

Hence, the nature of these establishments changed significantly through time. In the early phases they served primarily as status-symbols of those possessing power and wealth and for entertainment purposes. An important shift in the zoo policy was brought by the Zoological Society of London, which opened its garden in 1826, and which promoted the primacy of the scientific function of such establishment. Another crucial change occurred when German entrepreneur Carl Hagenbeck entered the scene. Unlike the Zoological Society and the London zoo, the Hagenbeck conception, realized in his zoo in Hamburg, aimed at public accessibility and attractiveness. As a result zoos started to adopt the attributes of an amusement park. At the same time, Hagenbeck came up with the invention of naturalistic exhibits, i.e. artificial simulations of natural landscapes with elements creating naturally looking barriers, allowing mixed-species exhibits. These panoramic views formed — from the perspective of the visitors — an artificial illusion of naturalness. Nevertheless, the role of zoo in society had changed with Hagenbeck from an intellectual and scientific bourgeois entertainment to a social amenity for the masses (Graetz 1995, n.p.). Today, the majority of zoological gardens portray themselves as "*flagships of environmental education, scientific research, and wildlife conservation*" (Acampora 2010, 1) even though there is still a conflict in balancing between these goals and the effort at providing entertainment.

3.1.1 Prague Zoo

Collecting animals on the territory of Prague dates back (at least) to the Middle Ages. From this era there is written evidence about the presence of lions at the Prague Castle (Kisling 2001, 140). Lions were popular animals that also became the heraldic emblem and later national symbol of the Czech lands. During the reign of the Emperor Rudolf II, there was even a great menagerie, one of the Europe's biggest at the time, housing many 'exotic' species, such as various felids, apes or a dodo bird. The majority of the animals were stuffed after their death and relocated into another then-popular setting, which was the cabinet of curiosities. Nevertheless, the menagerie did not outlive its patron much longer and declined soon after his death (Kisling 2001, 140-141).

The first attempts to establish a zoological garden in Prague emerged at the end of the nineteenth century. However, it was not until 1920s when these efforts began to take a more realistic shape (and thus the first Czech zoo was not opened in the capital, but in the city of Liberec in 1919). Professor Jiří Janda, who later became the first director of the Prague zoo, was entrusted with the preparatory works on the lands in Troja, donated for the purpose of creating a zoological garden. The zoo was officially inaugurated on September 28, 1931, and the first animals were progressively introduced: a female wolf Lotta, lions Šárka and Ctirad, sea lions Hýta and Batul, first Przewalski's horses, tigers, an elephant etc. (Zoo Praha 2014)[7].

During the communist era, all zoos in Czechoslovakia became state property and fell under the administration of the Ministry of Culture. The totalitarian isolation led to information deficiency concerning the trends in animal keeping or in the creation of exhibitions, as well as material lack of proper pharmaceutics or nutrition. Yet despite the lag the zoo achieved quite positive results in breeding (Jiroušek et al. 2005, 7). Governmental politics also influenced the manners of acquiring new animals: during this era, many animals were obtained directly from their natural settings in the so-called allied developing countries on the grounds of political sympathies and received economic aid.[8] For the longest time of thirty years, a prominent zoologist and ethologist, professor Zdeněk Veselovský held the post of the director of Prague Zoo. After the regime changes in 1989, many zoos struggled financially and progressively aimed to modernize their structures and enclosures in accordance with the newest global trends of animal keeping and presentation. Probably the biggest construction boom and 'facelift' of the zoo took place under the administration of Petr Fejk

7 http://www.zoopraha.cz/vse-o-zoo/historie/42-strucna-historie-prazske-zoo.

8 Today, a relevant example of the political and economic aspects behind the official zoo animal traffic is the Chinese 'panda politics', see e.g. http://www.ox.ac.uk/media/news_stories/2013/130925_2.html.

(1997-2009), who, not having a professional zoological background, directed the zoo rather as a firm under crisis management, and became something of a celebrity through his function. His charismatic leadership of the institution contributed to a rise in popularity and visit rates. Fejk started efforts at modernization but also a commercialization of the zoo. Nevertheless, it was also when the devastating floods of 2002 hit the zoo, causing the deaths of many animal inhabitants and vast damage. During the 1990s and 2000s, a number of new exhibits and pavilions were designed and built. Further innovations included a new, unified corporate identity featuring a logotype depicting a Przewalski's horse and all the graphic design based on linocuts by artist Michal Cihlář, which has at present been replaced by a logotype representing footprints of five animal species created by the New York brand design firm Chermayeff & Geismar.

At present, the Prague zoo lies within the administration of the municipality. According to the Ministry of the Environment, there are actually 24 licensed zoological gardens in the Czech Republic (Ministerstvo životního prostředí 2014), 14 of which are members of the Union of Czech and Slovak Zoos (UCSZOO). The Prague zoo is member of several associations and international institutions, such as IUDZ/WAZA (since 1956), IZE (since 1989), UCSZ (since 1990), EAZA (since 1992) and EARAZA (since 2004) (Jiroušek 2005, 8).

3.2 Zoo Functions

As outlined in the previous chapter, the shape of zoological gardens, together with their primary roles and functions, changed through history, prioritizing one of the roles or another. These changes are, as Beardsworth and Bryman (2001, 83) point out, interconnected with the crucial shifts in the legitimating narratives of the institution of the zoo.

Since the 19th century, the scientific role was most commonly privileged officially. However, the actual content of this scientific role of the zoo also varied. A significant change occurred in the 1970s when the focus turned from displaying taxonomic collections to housing and breeding endangered animals and raising environmental awareness (Davey 2006, 144).

If we look at the official web page of Prague zoo, its *raison d'être* and mission is defined as education of people, especially of the youth, scientific work and research on living animals together with the protection and conservation of endangered species *ex-situ* as well as

in-situ. Through the potential of living animals, the zoo declares to be able to influence the visitors' opinions, attitudes and behavior and to contribute to the creation of positive values (Zoo Praha 2014)[9]. This statement corresponds to the general conceptions of roles of zoological gardens as mentioned above. Nevertheless, the role of the zoo as a place of leisure and recreation of citizens, as enumerated next to the previous roles of zoo in the list made by Dobroruka (1989, 17), is absent from the official presentation of Prague zoo. Does this mean that modern zoological gardens should not be considered sites of entertainment — or, at least — are not used and designed as such by their representatives? Perhaps recreation and entertainment are considered to be, as Lee (2005) suggests, a weak justification for the existence of zoos, an undignified and ignoble goal (2005, 89).

Thus, zoos present themselves as mainly scientific institutions, stressing their crucial role in environmental awareness and education. Because the zoo is a public space and there is quite a broad spectrum of visitors considering their age, social background or level of knowledge, the scientific role of the zoo is strongly connected to the educational one. However, as Silva (2005) notes, for their visitors zoological gardens do not represent some neutral scientific and educational facility: there is a deep ambiguity in the zoo experience. The emotions linked to this site oscillate between attraction and revulsion, when the visitors "*feel awe and respect for animal subjects, but also guilt, anger and sadness reflecting the sacrifice involved in their confinement for pleasure*" (2005, 120).

In addition to the aforementioned functions, the zoo also persists in being a demonstration of power and prestige of its owner (whether this is a monarch, private person, city or a state). Prague zoo, currently under the administration of the city of Prague, serves as cultural representation of Prague as well as of the Czech Republic as a whole. A pertinent example of the national line one can find in the zoo is the installation of statues representing Czech cultural heritage, such as the Slavic god Radegast, god of harvest and cornucopia, which — except for his therianthropic features — has no direct connection to the zoo setting or its non-human inhabitants. Another example is the naming of animals: as it was mentioned, the first pair of lions that were brought into the zoo was given the names of Ctirad and Šárka, inspired by the legendary ancient Bohemian couple.

3.3 Zoo Controversies

In the two-part episode of Star Trek: The Original Series called *The Menagerie*, a moral dilemma

9 "Naše poslání." http://www.zoopraha.cz/cs/o-zoo/nase-poslani.

is presented when Spock disobeys the Starfleet regulations in order to transport his former commander, severely physically injured and paralyzed Captain Pike to planet Talos IV. This planet is inhabited by a highly evolved race, which collects other beings for breeding and conservation purposes. Keeping them in small glass cages, the members of the race create a simulated reality for the captive beings and manipulate their behavior in order to keep them entertained and satisfied (providing them supplied food, and on a given occasion a supplied mate (Berger 2007, 77), and, in the language of contemporary zoos, enrichment activities). In flashbacks, we see how Talosians tried to keep the captain and his landing-party under their protection and surveillance, but humans succeed to resist the mind games and rise up, showing their hatred for captivity, even if it creates pleasant and benevolent conditions. This story presents a convenient parallel to the functioning of zoos and the moral dilemmas they raise. It sets questions as to whether an illusion, although (almost) perfect, can replace the reality, or whether the creators of the illusion can know the preferences or understand the sentiments of the captives. It also uncovers the power imbalance of the relationship between the masters and those whom they want to help and who they want to protect through captivity.

In the previous chapter, I have already mentioned a certain ambiguity that is implicit to the zoos. Here, I would like to focus on the controversial issues, which are most strongly linked to the contemporary zoological gardens. The forthcoming chapters unfold some of the most poignant ones.

3.3.1 Building a New Ark: The Ideology behind Conservation

Even though conservation undoubtedly presents a noble goal, the historical and ideological background of the idea of protection of 'exotic' and endangered species is not completely unproblematic. First, I would like to shortly step back from its application to zoos to see the broader context of this phenomenon.

As Mullin (1999), among other authors, notes, we can find connections between conservationism, hunting and colonialism. The role of animals in the development of colonialism took different forms: whereas wild animal products provided the economic motivation for imperialism, domestic animals helped to facilitate the establishment of colonies (Mullin 1999, 205). But besides these roles, there was also an important ideological dimension to hunting and the collection and display of 'exotic species' (as it can be seen also by examining the animal exhibitions or zoological gardens of that period). In order to prove its

dominance, the colonial legislation first restricted the rights of indigenous populations to hunt for subsistence as sport hunting became a leisure activity for the privileged, that is to say the colonial representatives. Later, the colonial policy changed, focusing on protection of wild and endangered species. Nevertheless, the shift from hunting toward conservation maintained the restrictions concerning the local indigenous people, thus included an imbalance of power.

Photography theorist Susan Sontag describes this situation pertinently when she characterizes it as "*switching from bullets to film*" (2005, 11): the (former) colonialists come to the African safaris generally armed not with guns anymore, but with their cameras:

> The photographer is now charging real beasts, beleaguered and too rare to kill. Guns have metamorphosed into cameras in this earnest comedy, the ecology safari, because nature has ceased to be what it always has been — what people needed protection from. Now nature — tamed, endangered, mortal — needs to be protected from people. When we are afraid, we shoot. But when we are nostalgic, we take pictures. (Sontag 2005, 11)

'Wild' animals (whether actual creatures or representations), being considered as part of the 'Nature', are often valued also as a refuge from consumer capitalism (Mullin 1999, 216). On behalf of the sentiments of nostalgia, wild animals can still be captured and framed through the use of the camera, and thus framed by human gaze in the form of representations.

Power relations were always an integral part of zoological institutions. As Baker (2001, 67) points out, the spectacle of the zoo animal must be understood historically as a spectacle of colonial or imperial power. Zoos presented human mastery over animals — and thus subsequently over nature — as well as the country's influence and supremacy, and in the case of colonial powers they symbolized their dominance over distant territories. Being aware of the fact that the Czech Republic has never been a colonial empire, it is nevertheless possible to trace elements of this approach. In order to reveal the power relations within zoological gardens, Acampora (2005, 70) shows the relational dynamic of mastery that zoos have demonstrated. Originally, they projected the image of *man-the-monarch*, ruler of nature and lord of the wild, zoos being his symbol of dominion. Later, when zoos were converted into public menageries and served as entertainment for the masses, they sustained the imagery of *man-the-magician*, tamer of brutes and conjurer of captives. The contemporary notion of the zoo as an emblem of conservation policy creates the image of *man-the-messiah*, the modern-time Noah, savior of species, exhibiting animals through his saving graces. Thus, the often used metaphor of the zoo as a modern ark does not only involve the conservationist efforts and

achievements, but it also implies that there is some master who creates this ark. In the eyes of zoo defenders, through conservationist ideology and reforms in naturalistic architecture, modern zoos create an image of animal paradise on Earth, where in the brave new no-bars biodome, animals are effectively at liberty. Acampora argues on this topic that "*the dialectic of oppression manifests a paradoxical need—namely, that the master, consciously or otherwise, desires the slave to be free in and through exploitation itself*" (2005, 76). In the case of Prague Zoo, the Ark metaphor gained an unintended and disastrous dimension in 2002 during severe floods that also struck the area of the zoo, and the animals had to be saved and evacuated. Despite rescue action, several animals did not survive it or were put down after the attempts to free them from the flooded enclosures failed.

In a way similar to Acampora, Ingold asserts that there is a deeply rooted ideology of human mastery within Western thought, an idea of appropriation of nature and man's control over animality (1994, 11). By comparison of the institutions of totemism and conservationism, he points out that the Western cult of conservation precisely inverts the premise of totemism — the belief that animals made the world for humans, created the order and design of human social existence and are responsible for its continuation — proclaiming that "*from now on it shall be man who determines the conditions of life for animals* […] *and who shoulders the responsibility for their survival or extinction*" (Ingold 1994, 12). It implies that this hypothetical shift from a world whose meanings are made by animals to a world whose meanings are made by humans (Baker 2001, 178), totemism and conservationism, present just two systems of representation, two equivalent ways of making sense of the world.

3.3.2 Disappearing through Overexposure: Zoo, Pornography and Power

The structure of zoological exhibitions is adjusted to serve the gaze of zoo visitors. Whether it is to educate or to entertain them, it may convey the impression that the animals are there essentially for people. They live predominantly on display to the human public. Together with organizing of commented feeding and training sessions, zoos tend to adopt the form of a spectacle.

The overexposure of zoo animals can paradoxically lead to the disappearance of their own nature in a way that is similar, as Acampora points out, to pornography (2005). This analogy is based on visive violence inherent to both institutions where the 'show-items' are degraded and marginalized through marketing and consumption of their very visibility. If contemporary zoos legitimize themselves as modern arks or havens of wildlife protection (see

3.3.1), the above-mentioned fact undermines this ideology: as the author argues (Acampora 2005, 70), the exhibition of animals established by zoos erases the existential reality of the once wild creatures and thus alters their nature (as presented in 2.2.1). Thus, Acampora's assertion is in accordance with Berger's claim quoted earlier that zoos present a monument to the impossibility of encounters between humans and animals, as they lost their authenticity.

The aesthetics of the zoo share several traits with those of pornography: Acampora (drawing upon Griffin's analysis of pornography) lists among them the fetishization of the exotic, an underlying fear of nature, fantasies of illicit or impossible encounter, and a powerful presumption of mastery and control (2005, 74-75). Hence, the subjects — whether they are non-human zoo inhabitants or human porn participants — become "*visual objects whose meaning is shaped predominantly by the perversions of a patriarchal gaze*" (Acampora 2005, 75). This perspective unveils the zoo as an institution of power.

Thus, an interpretation of zoos adopting foucauldian ideas seems appropriate. Foucault (1981) speaks about social institutions (such as prison, mental asylum, school or factory), where hierarchical surveillance is applied, using techniques for control and supervision, and disciplinary mechanisms. The architectural incarnation of this principle is Bentham's prison design, the *Panopticon*. On the level of architecture, one can find its features in the design of the royal menagerie at Versailles or in the Schönbrunn zoo. Panopticon induces a sense of permanent visibility that ensures the automatic functioning of power. The subjects are extracted from their natural surroundings and separated. The panoptic model of surveillance and control thus creates docile bodies. Several differences notwithstanding, zoos function in a similar way, creating a "*nexus of power and vision*" (Acampora 2005, 79). Zoo animals live in exhibits designed to satisfy the human visitors' gaze and conform to their search for entertainment. They are largely unable to avoid the gaze of others, they cannot choose freely whether to associate or refuse to engage with humans. The main difference of zoological gardens from the more traditional forms of panopticon lies in the reversal of the intended perception of the supervisor or spectator: the aim is to make the zoo animals ignore the human presence and the gaze directed upon them, and thus to act as if they were not captive but in their natural environment.

3.3.3 Disneyization of Zoos, Disnification of Animals

It has been said that there is an ongoing change of conceptions and settings of zoological gardens. To understand these processes, Beardsworth and Bryman (2001) introduce the

phenomenon of *disneyization* of modern zoos, which is a tendency entailing several features, such as theming, dedifferentiation of consumption, merchandising, and emotional labor. Disneyization designates a process of diffusion of the principles intrinsic to the Disney theme parks that has been adopted by many other organizations including zoos.

Theming is the first of the trends brought by disneyization. The theme stands for some master narrative the institution adopts. In the case of zoos, this can be understood in two major senses. Within zoos, the conventional presentation of animals in species- or order-based categories is progressively retreating in favor of places or exhibits designed in a more abstract way. Mostly, these new areas tend to recreate a wider ecosystem context. The architecture and flora serve there to form quasifications of natural habitats (this phenomenon is examined in more detail in the following chapter, 3.3.4). Another manner how to comprehend theming of zoos is to see it as a process of reconstructing their institutional identities, i.e. at the corporate level: "*they are seeking to reinvent themselves in an institutional and cultural sense, in the light of changing public sensibilities concerning the capture and caging of animal, and changing conceptions of the relationship between humans and nature*" (Beardsworth and Bryman 2001, 93). As I argued in chapter 3.2, zoos justify their existence and publicize themselves as institutions committed to preservation of endangered species, raising environmental awareness and educating people about nature and the importance of its protection.

Secondly, zoos are undergoing a process of dedifferentiation of consumption. It is a general trend whereby different forms of consumption associated with different institutional spheres become mutually interlocked and shade into one another in such a way they become increasingly difficult to distinguish (Beardsworth and Bryman 2001, 94), like for example theme parks and shopping malls or hotels. Also, the distinction between zoos and theme parks is often blurred as many zoos encompass theme park attractions within their grounds. This can happen in various forms and volumes: the Bratislava zoo allocated part of its territory to *DinoPark*, with exhibition of life-size models of prehistoric animals and a 3D cinema. In Prague, the dedifferentiation of consumption manifests itself in a more dispersed manner, with a number of climbing frames for kids, attractions in the 'Children's zoo' like minitram, chairlift, 'minitrain' or pony rides through the zoo etc., together with shopping and eating facilities, which lead us to the third feature of zoo disneyization.

Thirdly, with the growing commercialism, zoos offer an increasingly wide range of merchandise, such as t-shirts, bags, pencils etc. Nevertheless, an important part of merchandising is constituted by the creation of representations of 'iconic' animals (such as tigers, gorillas etc.), and other species having a particular magnetism or seen as threatened with

extinction: "*the presentation of animals and animal performances by zoos can feed directly into the generation of commoditized images, which can have considerable commercial potential*" (Beardsworth and Bryman 2001, 96). These representations can thus be directly transformed into merchandise items.

A fourth feature of the zoo disneyization, which is progressively appearing and is related to the commercialization of zoos, is the emotional labor. Growing expectations of good customer service require individual worker's control of the self, "*a control which is geared to expressing socially desired emotions in the course of service transactions*" (Beardsworth and Bryman 2001, 96). Zoo employees are thus encouraged to demonstrate a positive attitude toward visitors as customers and their demands, become the "*ever-smiling, ever-helpful 'cast members'*" as those of Disney theme parks (Beardsworth and Bryman 2001, 97). But within zoos, the emotional labor is not restricted to the staff — the animals are involved as well, mainly the large mammals that are involved in performative acts. Behind these various spectacles, which encourage the animals to move and do something, there is the assumption that "*human emotional labour can be simulated when the animals are induced to display behaviour that can be interpreted by the audience as indicative of an emotion, such as friendliness, humour or mischievousness*" (Beardsworth and Bryman 2001, 97-98). These displays thus also serve to increase the attractiveness of merchandise that is based on the animals concerned. Another unique characteristic of emotional labor within zoos derives from environmentalist ethics and conservationist appeal and can provoke two antagonistic experiences: a sense of guilt raised by the awareness of environmental degradation and species extinction on the one hand, or, on the other, it can induce a 'feel good factor' based on a premise that the visitor by entering the zoo and buying its merchandise is somehow — even though indirectly — instrumental in the protection of species and their natural habitat.

However, one should distinguish disneyization from a different phenomenon, namely *disnification*. While the first notion describes the impact of Disney theme park principles on various organizations and institutional settings, disnification can be understood as the impact of a Disney approach to cultural products (Beardsworth and Bryman 2001, 90). It is characterized by infantilization and vulgarization of the original content, and often bears a pejorative undertone. Although these terms designate two independent and disparate phenomena, one may encounter both of them within the space of the zoological garden.

Disnification denotes the process of rendering the animal stupid by rendering it visual (Baker 2001, 174). In a certain way, it can be seen as opposite to signification: it stereotypes and trivializes the represented in a process of rather *making-nonsense* of the animal (Baker 2001,

175). One of the most frequent roles in representation the animal takes is the sign of all that is not taken very seriously in contemporary culture. "*Disnification is common sense applied to the image of the animal* […], *common sense's construction of the visual reality of the animal,*" where "*the look is everything: it has no need to call upon a wider frame of reference, nor to assume prior knowledge on the part of the reader. It constructs and maintains its own disnified order of common sense*" (Baker 2001, 176-177). Within common sense, as Baker points out, the meanings are made, not found, and commonsensical knowledge does not function as a constraint to consistence — on the contrary, it can easily accommodate inconsistency and contradiction, allowing "*abrupt juxtapositions of discontinuous and logically inconsistent representations of the animal,*" which sometimes creates a sense of "*perverse normality*" (Baker 2001, 172). It raises the question of what exactly counts as animal, as it often operates largely independently of any boundaries between such categories as the 'real', the representational and the symbolic. Disnification of animals is closely linked with application of the principle of neoteny, based on Konrad Lorenz's *Kindchenschema*, where features like bigger head, big eyes and short extremities elicit positive feelings of lovability and tenderness. Based on this principle, the look of the animal body preferred mainly in the field of visual representation is constructed as a photographic mirroring of desired reality, not distinguishing between the living animal and the animal toy, creating a "*cuddly coexistence*" between humans and even the wildest of animals (Baker 2001, 181).

3.3.4 Artificially Created Natural Environment

A much discussed feature of zoological gardens is the artificial environment they create around animals. The design of the space where animals are kept changed considerably through the history of zoos, from cages to more open and 'lifelike' enclosures. The contemporary design seeks to simulate natural environment and complex biotopes, in accordance with the tendency of internal theming of zoos. This also correlates with the trend of creating quasifications (term introduced in 2.2.1), artificial but meticulous mock-ups. One of the oldest examples, used by Beardsworth and Bryman (2001, 91), is *Jungle World* in Bronx Zoo, opened in 1985, representing segments of a rainforest or a mangrove swamp. In the case of Prague zoo, the pavilion called *Indonesian Jungle* best represents this type of object. In the pavilion opened in 2004 visitors can find a model of the tropical rainforest, as well as a dim corridor simulating nighttime in order to display nocturnal animals that would normally be sleeping during the zoo opening hours, and where fruit bats fly over the heads of visitors.

This is how the zoo attempts to attract people to visit the pavilion on their website: "*Explore the colorful life of southeastern Asia from the bottom of the streams to the highest crowns of the tree giants. The Indonesian Jungle pavilion will take you on an adventurous tour of the rainforest where you may encounter komodo dragons, orangutans, echidnae and many other fascinating creatures...*"[10] In this statement, primarily the environment is advertised, inviting the visitors into a complex world of rainforest, where they can not only admire the perfection of this quasified space, but actively participate: undertake an Indiana Jones-like journey into the wilderness where, in passing, he *may* encounter also some animals. Beardsworth and Bryman suggest that the creation of such quasifications may have a major influence on the setting and functioning of zoos, causing a possible shift in the very object of the visitor's gaze:

> there exists the probability that the exhibition of animals will become subordinate to the staging of elaborate quasifications of the 'wild'. Rather than the animals being the primary attraction, the settings themselves will become the main objects of the visitor's entranced and admiring gaze. Hence, the themed zoo becomes the location in which urban humans can experience a quasified form of the 'wild' with maximum comfort, convenience and safety. (2001, 100)

In general, Prague zoo presents their conception and design of the enclosures as focusing primarily on two domains: to allow visitors to make the idea of the real life of animals and their bonds to the environment, and to give animals the opportunity to develop a vast register of natural behavior (Zoo Praha 2014)[11]. But are the requirements of animals the same as those of the visitors? Silva draws attention to the fact that "*barred and 'dated' enclosures face much critique but more naturalistic enclosures score positively, regardless of their actual size and whether they meet the animal's needs*" (2005, 134). Aesthetic motivation is often primary.

There is an effort to mask the human nature of the place, to make visitors forget that it is situated in the urban landscape. However, the 'natural environment' recreated in the zoo is always a representation of nature driven from a certain perspective. Zoo constitutes "*a liminal place in which cultural expressions of nature are affirmed, contested and transformed*" (Silva 2005, 120). The nature presented is idealized and made more pleasant for the viewer. There are aspects of

10 http://www.zoopraha.cz/zvirata-a-expozice/kam-v-zoo/pavilony/5828-indoneska-dzungle, accessed 18 april 2014: "Objevte pestrý život pralesů jihovýchodní Asie ode dna vodních toků až po nejvyšší koruny stromových velikánů. V pavilonu Indonéská džungle zažijete dobrodružnou vycházku tropickým lesem, na které můžete potkat varany, orangutany, ježury a mnoho dalších fascinujících tvorů…"

11 "Naše poslání." http://www.zoopraha.cz/cs/o-zoo/nase-poslani.

natural life that are overshadowed so the visitors are spared from experiencing those elements which could make them uncomfortable. Zoo creates an ideal type of natural environment of the animals, where "*we hide real elements in the unnatural histories of these animals so that we can see their natural history in such detail*" (Rothfels 2002a, 7). The enclosures are arranged with care and caution. The animals or species in one area have to be compatible in order to diminish aggressive behavior or any violent scenes. Ill individuals are kept 'backstage', where also death occurs, hidden from the gaze of visitors. Carnivore species are never in direct contact with animals which could serve as their live prey, and so forth. "*Clean gardens and carefully managed exhibits bespeak cultural conditioning and human control. Human intervention in the zoo context tones down Nature's nastiness, death and disease, as well as species/individual incompatibility,*" zoological gardens thereby contribute to perpetuation of the "*peaceable-kingdom myth of the natural world*" (Silva 2005, 136).

3.4 Zoo Animals

In the first part of the present thesis, I have already outlined the different categories into which the animals are placed, arguing that the 'zoo animal' is different from so called wild animals as well as from pets. But what exactly are these zoo animals, the creatures living within the space of Prague Zoo, and how do the visitors look at them, perceive them or interact with them? In this chapter, several categories are distinguished of how the zoo animal is apprehended and constructed by the zoo visitors as well as the zoo itself.

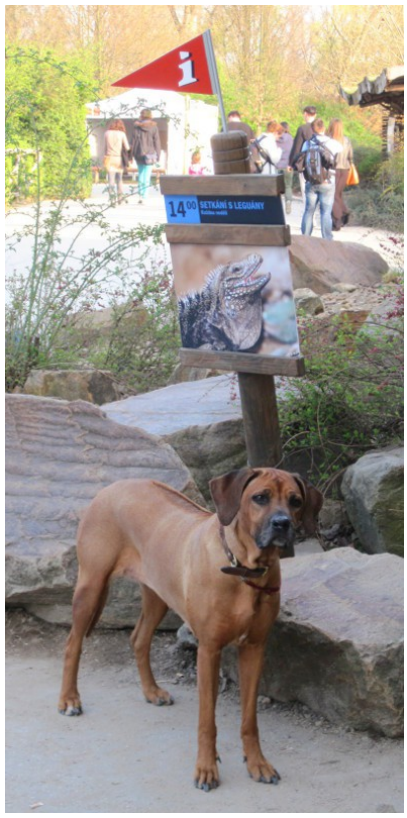

Figure 1: A dog visitor waiting for the encounter with the iguanas?

To quote Rothfels, "*in the end, an animal or species is as much a constellation of ideas* […] *as anything else. And, as with history itself, each generation seems to remake its animals*" (2002a, 5). Thus, in each of the subsequent subchapters, I try to delineate the ways in which the Prague Zoo and its visitors remake the animals of theirs. Eight types of the zoo animal appearing in Prague Zoo were identified and are presented on the following pages.

3.4.1 Heroes and Legends

When visiting the Prague zoo, before one enters its space passing under the main gate, one is led through the zoo's own walk of fame, similar to its counterpart in Hollywood. Instead of movie stars, these belong to the selected non-human inhabitants of this institution. Even though those whose names are written on the stars and whose paws and claws are imprinted in them are not alive anymore, the walk of fame points to an important way how can the animal be interpreted — as a celebrity, an individual and specific personality.

One of the main campaigns of Prague Zoo is founded on this basis, designated *Meet them!*[12] (*Seznamte se!*), which presents chosen individuals of various species — actually 25 "*most interesting inhabitants from Prague Zoo*" (Prague Zoo 2014). The zoo thus actively builds PR to these particular non-human persons through their website, advertising campaigns with billboards in the streets and underground, depicting portraits and names of these zoo dwellers. This, together with the re-creation of complex ecosystems, seems to be part of a more general trend in zoos (and also similar to that in contemporary museums), a "*move towards 'story-driven' rather than 'object-driven' displays*" (Anderson 2007, 205).

Figure 2: Official portraits of the Zoo celebrities: Meloun, son of Gaston, meritorious mother Aranka, cartilaginous humorist Otorongo and intrepid and stubborn Čert ('Devil'). Source: Prague Zoo website.

12 Cf. http://www.zoopraha.cz/zvirata-a-expozice/seznamte-se.

In some cases, the zoo visitors indeed know the names of the animals before getting to the zoo and when they come to the enclosures, they point at them or call them directly by their given names. This is for example the case with the male Cape fur seal Meloun (whose name is also Czech word for melon):

> A school group of children around 9 years of age arrives to the Cape fur seals, who are swimming in the pool. Some of the children run to them. "*That's Meloun!*" says a girl. A boy laughs: "*Hehe, she called him melon.*" Another boy corrects him: "*It is his name, you know.*" (March 20, 2014)

> Woman, man (30) and two children (3 and 5) in the interior part of fur seals' exhibit, looking under water and commenting on Meloun, the woman is taking photos. The boy asks her if she's going to take photos without flash. "*Sure, animals may be photographed only without flash*," she says. "*Because they would die otherwise?*" "*No, but it doesn't make them well.*" Some of the fur seals are swimming in their direction, the boy asks: "*And are they all Melons?*" "*No, it's only his name, the others have their own names, let's find out if they're written somewhere outside...*" The woman then reads to the children about Meloun (*Meet them!* table) and explains further about the flood, Meloun's fatherhood etc. (June 16, 2014)

Meloun's life story and personality is probably one of the most profoundly built within the zoo. One can find out about his story on the Prague Zoo website, where it is presented as follows: Meloun became the head of the family after the already mentioned tragic flood of 2002, where he lost his father Gaston and had to assume the responsibility of the leader of the whole group in his early age. His widowed mother, Julinka, took good care of him, so he grew up into a strong and burly young male. From his late father, he inherited a friendly and communicative character, but he is even more kind-hearted than Gaston: "*he also loves to kiss – both the females that keep him company in the enclosure and the people who come to visit him*" (Prague Zoo 2014). His life narrative carries features of drama with a happy ending.

However, his father's story is indeed tragic, as Gaston became a symbol of the great flood of 2002, which hit a significant part of the zoo and caused the deaths of many of its animal inhabitants. 'Daredevil Gaston' (as designated by a BBC journalist) broke out from his flooded tank and continued his journey along the Vltava and Elbe rivers to Germany, where he was captured after five days, but died on the way back to the zoo. His story was also reported by foreign news broadcasts such as BBC or CNN.[13] His name remains known and

13 Cf. "Czech seal caught in Germany," http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/europe/2200465.stm, "Prague's rescued

remembered through not only Meloun's story: there is a restaurant within the zoo named after him and a statue by Czech artist Veronika Richterová (see Figure 3).

Figure 3: Gaston's commemorations. Source: author (1) and Michal Cihlář, Veronika Richterová website (2 and 3).

A similar situation can be observed with the gorillas, who also have a strong PR (among them, the kind and friendly female Bikira takes part in the *Meet them!* campaign), augmented by a project inspired by the concept of reality shows, where the zoo, together with Czech Television and broadcast, created a popular program *The Revealed*[14], presenting the life of the group of gorillas. The project was carried out under the auspices of the contemporary zoo director Miroslav Bobek and, similarly to the 'traditional' reality shows, people could vote via sending text messages for one of the gorilla participants, based on their preferences for the particular (non-human) person.

Animals incorporated in the *Meet them!* campaign also have their own information panels within the zoo next to the (often smaller and less visually distinctive) tables informing

seal dies," http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/europe/2204853.stm, "Prague's hero seal is posthumous father," http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/europe/3143839.stm for BBC or "Sorrow as 'hero' flood seal dies," http://edition.cnn.com/2002/WORLD/europe/08/20/floods.seal/ for CNN.

14 Cf. the official website of the project at http://www.rozhlas.cz/therevealed/portal/.

about the species. Concerning the animals of species not included in the campaign, they have mostly been given personal names, too (except for some of the small and numerous species; based on a conversation with a zoo staff member, June 16, 2014). Nevertheless, these names are commonly not presented in public to any large extent. Thus, while some of the animals come to the foreground as separate individuals, others lack this attention and in this sense are retreating (see the case of lemurs and proper names in chapter 3.4.6). Sometimes, the zoo animal presents just a generic specimen of the given species to the visitors:

> Man with a child (5), showing him a pig in the Children's zoo: "*Piggy!*" The child asks: "*Is it Pepina the Piggy?*" [as in the kids' animation series 'Peppa Pig'] "*No, this is just a piggy,*" answers the man. (April 6, 2014)

3.4.2 Decorations of the Environment

The previous chapter showed how some animals receive attention as distinct personalities, however, at the same time zoo animals somehow paradoxically lose their central role as they become only one part of a minutely fabricated 'natural environment' (as partially discussed in chapter 3.3.4).

Figure 4: Marketing campaign of Prague Zoo, February 2014. Source: Prague Zoo website.

In its newest pavilions, the Prague Zoo tends to recreate whole biotopes with its animals, dense vegetation, humidity, noises, etc., so the visitors do not only see animals, but

they can undertake, as someone wrote into the zoo's visitors' book, "*a fairytale trip into the paradise amidst the dusty city*" (June 16, 2014). This idea of a 'natural paradise' set within the civilization is actively supported by the zoo itself, for example by its marketing campaign launched in the beginning of 2014, which used slogans such as "Wilderness in Prague", "Tropics in Prague", "Desert in Prague" and others (see Figure 4), which, even though using a photograph of an animal belonging into this type of habitat, draws attention to the environment itself and the contrast created between the city where the zoo is geographically located and the climate and atmosphere of faraway places it claims to be able to re-create within its limited space.

The zoo thus attracts visitors using the idea of a 'safe' wilderness, where one may make a journey to 'exotic' countries minutes from home, experience an adventure without the need for vaccination, and where one may encounter 'wild' animals without the danger of meeting a snake, tarantula or some other potentially dangerous creature too closely and being jeopardized by their venomous bite or constriction. The Prague zoo offers a tropical rainforest with trees and lianas under a glass dome, where, in the warm and humid microclimate, the visitor passes through a narrow path, listening to the song of invisible birds, and perhaps, when he looks behind the pond and waterfall, he or she can from the corner of the eye catch an orangutan passing by. Similarly, the Cape fur seals' enclosure imitates a rocky sea shore. The interior part of this exhibit, where fur seals can be observed while swimming underwater, is designed to resemble a cave. Furthermore, the entrance to the cave hides speakers, which emit sounds of the sea sloshing on the shore. Hence, through the advertising campaign as well as the enclosures' design, animals are retreating as an object of the gaze, while the importance of the perfected (un)natural environment is rising.

Figure 5: Recreating 'natural' environment: pavilions Indonesian jungle, Sichuan and Fur seals exhibit.

A different approach is offered in the elephants' enclosure and its surroundings, which was also designed so as to emphasize the environment. Nevertheless, the environment is understood in a different manner in this case. As I have argued, zoos tend to maintain the ambiance of exoticism, where the animal fulfills the role of the 'Other' (see chapter 2.2). However, it is not only the animal that creates the exotic environment; this may be augmented by the surrounding settings. One of the most poignant examples is the so-called Elephant Valley, opened in 2013.

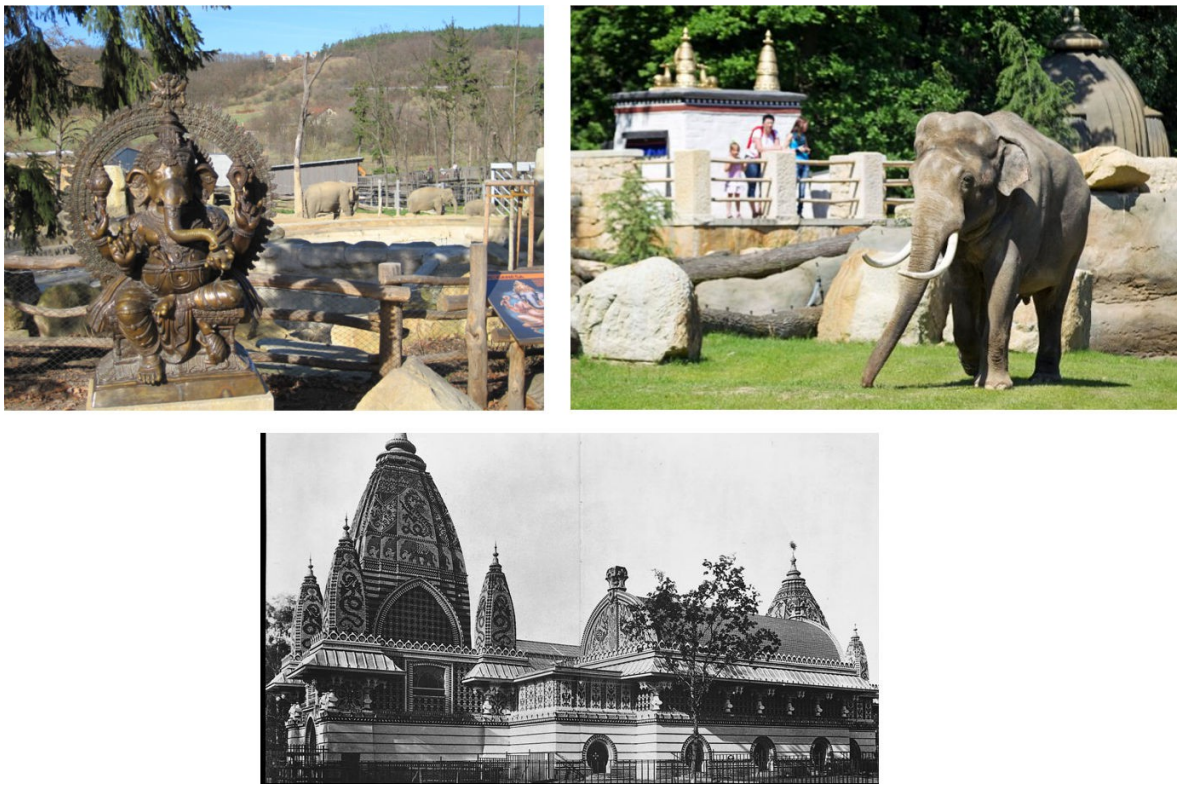

Figure 6: Contemporary Elephants' exhibit in Prague Zoo and the Elephant Pagoda in Berlin Zoo built in 1870s. Source: author (1), Tomáš Adamec, Prague Zoo website (2) and Rothfels (2002a, 36) (3).

The elephants' exhibit draws heavily upon the aesthetics of exoticism as well as that of colonialism. Besides the actual enclosure for the elephants (divided into an exterior and interior part), there is a path drifting through the 'valley', with a number of artifacts: bronze statues of decorated elephants, statues of Hindu deities, all imported directly from India, even two religious buildings, a Buddhist shrine with a statue of Buddha inside and a Hindu temple 'devoted' to Ganesha, an 'elephant ride simulator', an 'indigenous village' (to the contrary of Hagenbeck's earlier versions, without indigenous people) with 'traditional huts' etc. Indeed, the part representing 'indigenous culture' is a less typical element of contemporary exhibits. The

English version of Prague Zoo website introduces the *Elephant Valley* and its design as follows: "*The compound is equipped with a comprehensive information system complemented by many original artifacts to illustrate the thousands of years of close coexistence between elephants and humans*" (Prague Zoo 2014). It emphasizes the human-animal relationship, which it intends to introduce and clarify. Nevertheless, the Czech version (which is also more extensive) offers the following description:

> The 500 meters long path meandering along the Elephant Valley is full of experiences. You can enjoy not only the singular views of numerous elephant herd, but also a ride on a unique elephant ride simulator, dozens of original Asian artifacts, an indigenous village and even two shrines. Welcome to the world of elephants![15] (Prague Zoo 2014)

This extract focuses rather on the perspective of the visitors, points out that the space is adjusted to their gaze (*singular views*), proposing them an adventure, an exotic journey (if they take the *path* through the *valley*), and a number of tourist attractions. More than an elephant zoo exhibit, it resembles an elephant-themed theme park. At the same time, it raises question of what '*the world of elephants*' looks like. Do the huts made of wood and straw, bronze statues, or even an elephant ride simulator belong into their world, as the text suggests? As Beardsworth and Bryman (2001, 92) argue, the theming inside zoos, based on creating contexts in which animals can roam more freely, is a product of public unease about the sight of rows of captive animals in cages. However, theming in terms of an exotic (Asian or African) motif is largely extraneous to these claims that mirror the modern sensibilities and attitudes to captive animals. If the naturalistic environment is perceived as beneficial for the animals — and not designed to enhance rather the sense of well-being of the zoo visitor, as Beardsworth and Bryman (2001, 92) suggest — in this case, it brings out another question: are the elephants from Prague zoo feeling more comfortable when near Hindu temples?

In the lower part of the 'valley', huts of traditional Indian style are placed. Next to these, information panels are installed, which display the following texts:

> What is a moment for India or Sri Lanka? An evening of singing, a week of harvesting? The tranquil life of villagers does not include many of our conveniences. But villagers don't know about civilization diseases, stress and heart attacks. We have something to learn in our harassed

15 "Půl kilometru dlouhá stezka vinoucí se kolem Údolí slonů je plná zážitků. Vychutnat si můžete nejen jedinečné výhledy na početné sloní stádo, ale i jízdu na unikátním sloním trenažéru, desítky originálních asijských artefaktů, domorodou vesnici a dokonce i dva svatostánky. Vítejte ve světě slonů!"

life in Europe...

> Let's sit back to the romance of a campfire and soak up the atmosphere of life that people have been leading unchanged for hundreds of generations in remote parts of the Asian tropics. A life determined by traditions, where spirituality breathes at every step...[16] (June 16, 2014)

These extracts from information tables, rather than giving factual information, contribute to creating the image of an exotic Other. Apart from the animals, the people from 'Orient' (the Orient of postcolonialism) are exoticized: a clear opposition is drawn between 'us' (civilized Europe) and 'them' (villagers from India and Sri Lanka). The 'Other' and his ways of life are heavily romanticized: the villagers perceive time differently, are not hurried, live calmly, in harmony with their traditions and with the 'Nature' — they even have not allegedly change in *hundreds* of generations — as opposed to the fast, civilized, stressful and materialist society of 'us'.

Asian spirituality and religions are also exhibited within the 'Elephant Valley', in the form of religious buildings and statues. All of them have captions, naming the object and precising its authentic Indian origin. On the information panels, the shrines and their parts are described, and in three sentences, Buddhism is explained. The whole space creates a square dividing the elephants' enclosure into two parts:

> Elephant Valley, upper part. People are walking along the imitations of temples and statues of deities. They are turning the prayer wheels (in both directions, not only in the right ritual order). Inside both temples, there are coins from visitors, around Ganesha and in Buddha's palm. Several groups of people are taking photos of themselves with some of the statues. The elephants are in the adjacent part of their enclosure, nevertheless the visitors do not seem to be interested in them, nor are they taking photos of them. A couple, man and woman (20), is passing by: "*Here is that Indian rubbish,*" Successively, two men imitate the posture of Shiva for a photo shot. 2 women (late 30s) and a child (8), one of them wants a photo with Shiva. She poses and the girl stands behind her, making an impression of a second pair of arms. A teenage couple, man and woman, comes, the girl wants to take photos, the boy is not interested. Then, he spots the statue of half-naked Parvati, smiles saying that he did not notice

16 In this case, I cite the longer, Czech version of imprinted text. "Posaďte se k romantice ohniště a nasajte atmosféru života, který v zapadlých končinách asijských tropů vedou lidé beze změn již stovky generací. Života určovaného tradicemi, kde spiritualita dýchá na každém kroku..." Information panel 'Tradiční chýše' in *Elephant Valley*, Prague Zoo (June16, 2014).

her earlier, and poses there for a picture. A man, child and a woman (40) carrying a handbag with a big sign 'Ohm' in Sanskrit, she takes her dog in her hands: "*Let's take a picture with the booby lady!*" Then, the girl is photographed with Ganesha ("*I want one with the elephant,*"), and the man with Shiva: he goes to the statue and slaps his hand: "*High five!*" (June 30, 2013)

Visitors thus seem interested in the cultural and religious artifacts that are incorporated within the elephants' exhibit (sometimes more than in the living animals), nevertheless, their attitude towards them is generally that of a superficial interest and amusement. The design of 'Elephant Valley' conveys the impression of anachronism: as part of the maintained atmosphere of exoticism the animal is presented as the Other, which is supplemented also by symbols of exoticism in the form of architecture, non-European religions etc. Thus, Prague Zoo generates exoticization not only of the animals but of the given culture as well.

3.4.3 Human Images and Mirrors

Animals are similar yet different from humans, which can be one of the reasons people have been interested, sometimes even fascinated by them — as Mason (2007, 18) points out, this forced humans to make various comparisons and categories. Within the zoo, one way people tend to look at animals is as kind of humans, projecting into them human characteristics, motives and personalities. This is partially connected to the tendency of recognizing zoo animals as separate individuals with their proper histories (as analyzed in chapter 3.4.1). Nevertheless, although these also carried some anthropomorphizing features, it was part of building their own personality, whether in this case, the animals are rather dummies on which human characters are imposed.

Figure 7: Meerkats mirroring in the glass of their enclosure.

The inclination to anthropomorphism is manifested in the reactions to and commentaries of animals' activities and of their behavior within managed spectacles, where the animals are learned to perform human gestures, while these are appreciated by the audience:

Feeding and training session of fur seals. The zoo keeper is throwing fish to the fur seals, people are sitting at the tribunes and standing around the pool. The largest wave of interest raises when a fur seal shakes keeper's hand and 'kisses' her, and then when two of the fur seals 'kiss' each other by touching their muzzles: there is a collective "*Ooh!*" from the tribunes. (October 5, 2013)

In another situations, visitors appraise the animals as metaphors for people, ascribing purely human motivations, thoughts or activities to them. It can be part of trying to figure out the inner state and emotions of the animal, and their reasons, or it may just derive from outer resemblance based on their posture, expression or action.

Gorillas. Man with a boy: "*Let's also look at the male. Look how big he is! He is so big. And he looks angry... He's angry because everyone is taking pictures of him.*" Later, a man in mid-30 comments the male too: "*Is he angry! Someone's been probably seeing his missus behind his back...*" (March 20, 2014)

"*Just like an old gossiper from a courtyard balcony,*" a man comments a polar bear lying up in the entrance to the interior part of their enclosure, head and paws sticking out. (October 5, 2013)

Another use of zoo animals is to handle them as mirrors for morality, through which the visitors should reflect on their own behavior. It indicates that the roles are inverted and the animals are those who observe and judge, as one visitor commented in the lemurs' enclosure, where the experiencing of this situation may be augmented by the fact visitors enter directly into the lemurs' space, not separated by any fences or barriers: "*I'm not sure here whether the lemurs are observing us or we are observing them.*" Managing animals as mirrors is often used by adults to conduct their misbehaving children to reflect and change their demeanor:

Elephants. A woman to a child (4): "*If you cry, you will scare the elephant and he will run away!*" - "*Yeah, and we won't see him at all,*" adds another woman. (April 6, 2014)

Woman to her child: "*Look at the lemur, how he's laughing at you, because you are crying!*" (March 20, 2014)

Polar bears. "*Now he's looking at us, and he is telling to himself: Why did that little girl cry so much? I wonder if she didn't want something silly?*" says a man (30) to a small child. The girl wants him to carry her. "*I will not carry you, but I will lift you for a bit so the bear will see that we are here together.*" (October 5, 2013)

The animals can become examples for humans in general, through comparison of their respective lifestyles and priorities. They may take the form of 'noble savages', creatures close to the idealized 'Nature', thus perceived through the lens of sentimentalism, as those who are not spoiled by the civilization and vices of modern society:

> Gavials. "*He just loafs there, and lies the whole day,*" says the man, and starts to explain what are their teeth like and what they eat. "*And why doesn't he open his mouth?*" asks the child. "*Cause they are reasonable, and they don't chase after something all the time, like people do...*" (April 6, 2014)

In another cases, it is indeed the concrete animal itself that is subject of comparison. Some people liken the animals to themselves or their companions and relatives. These comparisons can take different forms, whether they are partially humorous, based on the appearance, or more direct, for example comparing the age or familial role and status.

> A man carrying a small child points at the fur seal pup lying on the shore to the rest of his group, excited. "*That's the new born, like you,*" he says to the child. (October 5, 2013)

Another observed phenomenon is fascination of visitors by animal excretion, an action they tend to watch and comment:

> Man and two women over 70. After having watched the elephants, they continue on the road alongside the elephant enclosure. One of the women stops at the end of it. There are no animals; two zookeepers are picking up elephant dung. Next to her, a man and a woman (50) are standing, the man is taking pictures of the dung picking. After observing the process for a while, the woman leaves exclaiming: "*What meadow muffins!*" (March 20, 2014)

> 2 couples, men and women (20). First man: "*Oh my god, a hippopotamus just took a dump in the water in live broadcast!*" The second man adds: "*Last time in the outer enclosure, a hippo stood up, went over to the adjacent part of his enclosure, shat there, returned back and lied down again.*" - "*But that's cool!*" says the first one and they go closer to the glass, observing hippopotamuses. (April 6, 2014)

To paraphrase Mason once more, animals have fascinated us and provoked thought through being the "*noisy, lively, eating, drinking, sleeping, shivering, fighting, playing, copulating, urinating, defecating, bleeding, dying*" others (2007, 18). Seeing these activities by zoo animals attracts visitors, raises their attention and interest.

3.4.4 The Animal as a Toy

Another way of perceiving the animal is considering it to be kind of a toy or a puppet. By the *toy*, I understand something that is regarded as being nice, cuddly and adorable; serving primarily for entertainment of the human visitors, fulfilling their function as a source of fun and even mocking. There is also the implication that the animal is there *for* the human, to serve his needs (mainly, as mentioned, the need for entertainment). This form of animal shares several traits with the phenomenon of disnification (as presented in chapter 3.3.3), and applies not only to the animal representations, but also to the animals themselves. It thus creates stereotyped, trivialized subjects.

The first manner in which this animal category manifests itself is through interpreting the zoo animal as something (rather than someone) the visitors find so cute or funny they would like to have it at home, as a pet, neglecting the 'wild' status of the animal and its general characteristics. This is usually made apparent in the conversations of the visitors through short remarks or not utterly serious dialogues:

> A boy of 8 years, watching the otters: "*I wouldn't mind having one at home!*" (April 6, 2014)

> Penguins' pavilion. Man and woman in their 30s with a child in a pram. Woman says to the man: "*I want a penguin, buy me a penguin!*" "*Where would you keep him?*" he reacts. "*In the fridge.*" (June 30, 2013)

> Tigers enclosure. Man and woman, 17. Man turns to the woman: "*Now you know what to get me for Christmas – a kitten,*" he says referring to the observed tigers. (October 5, 2013)

Secondly, zoo animals function as a source of entertainment, as they are considered to be amusing or often ridiculous. The entertainment can be linked to official zoo spectacles, as for example popular feeding and training sessions of the fur seals. Nevertheless, visitors are sometimes entertained merely by the actions or even the appearance of animals. This aspect can be interpreted in two different manners. People can try to establish a certain relation with the animal through distraction, creating something similar to an asymmetrical joking relationship (Radcliffe-Brown 1940, 195), a form of interaction based on teasing and mocking, where the one side makes fun of the other as part of the bonding, whereas the other should not take any offense. On the other hand, the mocking and depreciating can be closer to ignorance, when there is no more profound interest in the animal or in learning about it,

besides the amusement:

> 2 women in their 30s and 3 children (8) near the vulture's aviary. One woman says: "*Let's also go to the anteater, it's kind of a pig... an anteater, it looks like a pig...*" They are approaching the tapirs. "*Here,*" the woman comes to the glass, behind which tapirs are sleeping. The second woman shortly glances at the information table: "*Taper...*" Children look at the animals, shouting: "*Pig! Pig!*" The second woman comes to them after having read the table: "*It's a tapir. From Asia... kinda Asian pig.*" (March 20, 2014)

The asymmetry of the relationship between humans and the animal-as-toy is also given by considering the zoo as a spectacle when the visitors adopt the role of audience and they assume that the animals are there for their disposition and that they would accommodate to the beholders' demands, that they would comfort to the human gaze:

> Lion exterior exhibit, one lioness is lying there, showing her back to the passersby. A man and a woman around 30, both are taking photos. The woman starts to lure the feline: "*Come, kitty, kitty...*" The animal does not respond, the woman goes away. While leaving, she turns to the lioness one more time and gestures threateningly towards her with a hand in fist. (October 5, 2013)

> Polar bears. "*Call me when he jumps into the water,*" a child says to a woman and runs away to the slide. Meanwhile, another child keeps asking the adults, why the bear is not going into the water, but no one answers. (October 5, 2013)

Sometimes, visitors just express their frustration: "*They should turn the whole zoo around, all the animals are turned with their asses to us!*" or "*I don't get it, why do the animals have to be like lying all the time!*" when the zoo reality does not correspond to their mental picture of zoos or of an encounter with animals.

3.4.5 Caged in Frames and Pixels

As zoo is predominantly a visual place — defined heavily by the act of looking — it encourages to create and recreate more visual stimuli besides the actual physical animals. One of the forms that is quite eminent is photography, executed both from the side of visitors and the zoo institution. One can find large quantity of animal photos on zoo websites or in their

promotional materials as well as within the zoo itself, on the many information panels, interactive multitouch panels and screens.

Figure 8: Lemur takes a 'selfie' in London Zoo. Source: ZSL.

In March 2014, ring-tailed lemur Bekily from Zoological Society of London made it to several media when he allegedly took a popular 'selfie', a photograph of himself, as he grabbed his keeper's camera and focused it toward his own face (see Error: Reference source not found). This minor story that entered the offbeat news reflects the contemporary vogue of making and sharing photographic images, which is related to the mass accessibility of images recording optical devices and the vast possibilities of sharing them, for example via divers social media.

Many of the visitors are tempted to capture the animals, but also the skillfully crafted models of nature, through the lens of their camera or cell phone. In Sontag's words (see 3.3.1) they are chasing for trophies in form of nice compositions and shooting the animals so they can take them home in their photographic devices. In some cases, the act of taking a picture seems to be more important than seeing the actual animal: "*'Grandma, come here and take a picture of him* [tiger]*,' but the woman wants to go already. 'So come to look at him at least'*" (April 6, 2014). Then, the educational function of zoos often recedes, and the particular species ceases to be relevant in confrontation with the urge to create and collect images:

> Two women around 20 years appear, pushing prams. One of them turns to the child: "*Look, we can make you a photo on the lion!*" she says excited as she points to the wooden tiger statue. Then, both women put their children on the statue and instruct them how to sit, where to put their hands or how to look. (April 27, 2012)

It is not essential to correctly identify the animal nor to teach the children about the given species, but to make a good composition for the shot. Probably a more escalated example is the following one, showing a situation where a woman actively prevents her child to watch an animal in order to have pictures of him with the given animal. When he wants to learn about the animal and its behavior, he gets only teasing, mocking answer:

> Gavials' pavilion. A boy around 5 years is watching turtles and gavials through the glass. "*Look*

> *over here or he will swim away from you!*" says a woman and urges him to turn away from the animals to the lens of her camera. The boy continues to look at animals, the situation repeats several times. He asks if the gavials won't bite the other animals. "*No, they will swallow them entire straightaway,*" answers the man sitting on the porch behind. "*Fuck you, you won't have any photos!*" says the woman as the child tries to run away to see the animals better. After a longer time, when she takes a number of photos of the child, the boy asks: "*Mom, can I go now?*" "*Yes, now, you can watch,*" the woman sits on the porch and goes through the pictures, "*I have like a thousand of photos already.*" "*So we can go,*" says the man and they leave. The whole time, they used the word 'crocodile' to speak about the gavials. (March 22, 2013)

As shown already in the first example of this chapter, the animal making object of the snapshot can be the animal *an sich* or even its representational form. In many cases, the real animals are competing with their representations:

> A group of school children around 7 years. "*Come look at this, this is cool!*" one girl calls an another to see a tiger behind the glass. "*Wait,*" answers the second girl watching the large multitouch panel. "*This is way cooler,*" says the first. The second girl comes to her, they are watching the tiger for a while, then she drags her to the panel. After spending some time there, one of the girls takes a photo of the image of the tiger on the screen on her phone. (March 22, 2013)

The animals on the touchscreens, panels and photographs are those one is used to from media and documentaries, and those one recognizes as the 'right' way the animal should look like. The wild animal created and reproduced in media is generally active, gazing fiercely to the camera, or performing some gripping action, whilst the one lying behind the glass, showing its back while taking a nap, may be found lacking these qualities by the audiences (or boring and disappointing, as presented in 3.4.4). This leads sometimes to the phenomenon of multiplication of representations, when the animals already in form of representation are newly reproduced into another representational mode.

The importance of photographs is linked to the touristic character of zoos. And as Urry points out, "*the* [tourist] *gaze is constructed discursively and materially through images and performances of photography, and vice versa*" (2011, 155). Photography gives shape to the tourist experience, converting it into an image, a souvenir: "*Most tourists feel compelled to put the camera between themselves and whatever is remarkable that they encounter*" (Sontag 2005, 6). Zoo visitors often stop in front of the exhibits just to take a picture and then continue further, thus looking only

through their camera, which frames and mediates their gaze. Then, after making a photograph, they proceed, checking the picture while leaving, to the next 'checkpoint' where they use their camera again.

Figure 9: Capturing the animal.

3.4.6 The Real Tiger is Made of Wood

The boundary between the animal *an sich* and its representation can blur and they become interchangeable, even more, the representation can emerge as being better than the reality itself. If the visitors come to the zoo with a preliminary idea of how the animals should look like and behave, based mainly on their representations in media, documentaries, films and popular culture, as mentioned above in the previous chapter, then the visitors may be disappointed and search for the animals that are most similar to the mental picture of them. This is visible at the places where visitors can choose from more forms of the animal, as for example at the tigers' enclosure. The tigers' enclosure is accessible from the feline pavilion and terrarium for the interior spaces and from the outside visitors can look from above into the exterior part. There is a life-size painted wooden statue of a lying tiger across the path (see Figure 10).

Figure 10: Which of these tigers is the most tigerish?

> Tigers' enclosure, exterior. A tiger is sleeping in the exhibit, turned with his back to the passersby. The sculpture is fully occupied: groups of men and women with children are coming toward the statue and create a line in order to take photos. A man takes a picture of a child sitting on the statue, the girl stays there afterward for some time. Next to them, a couple, man and woman, shuffle around until the tiger is free. After the child leaves, the woman comes to the statue, grabs tiger's ear and poses for the shot. When they are leaving the place alongside the tigers' enclosure, the man is checking the photo on the screen of his camera. (April 27, 2012)

Sometimes it is not the living animate creature that the reference is founded on, but a representational one, to which the zoo animal is compared. As Berger claims, "*adults take children to the zoo to show them the originals of their 'reproductions'*" (2007, 75):

> Gavials. A man lifts his child: "*Do you see, do you see that eye? And how sharp the teeth are? He is just like yours from Lego!*" (April 6, 2014)

In some cases, a certain animal representation from pop culture becomes model for the zoo animal (and not the other way around). Visitor recognize in the anonymous zoo animal the movie character, with whom they are familiar:

> Lemurs. "*That's the king, what was his name?*" - "*King Jelimán*" [Julien, character from animated movie Madagascar] (October 5, 2013)

> Pekaris. 3 French, 2 men and a woman, early 20s. "*Ce sont les Pumbaas!*" [as a warthog character from animated Disney movie Lion King] "*Regarde, c'est mignon! … Grogne, grogne*," they look at the pigs and grunt. Then, they go to the panel to see, what these animals are: "*Les Pekaris!*" (June 16, 2014)

In these cases, the zoo animals do not appear as differentiated individuals (as in part 3.4.1). They appear rather as a representation themselves since a better known, even though fictional, animal personality is projected onto them. The individual differences or characters do not matter, as all the ring-tailed lemurs become 'king Julien', the funny Disney-like figure that the visitors know from the movie, or the pekaris change into 'Pumbaas' because they are pigs, even though of a different species, but the animated warthog Pumbaa becomes the most important representative of 'wild pigs'.

A strong interconnection of different forms in which the zoo animal appears and is presented can be found by the Chinese giant salamanders, who were newly acquired by the zoo in 2014 and a completely new pavilion was built exclusively for them, opening of which was reinforced by a particular advertising campaign. The giant salamanders have settled in the Prague Zoo in various forms: the zoo got a number of adult as well as young giant salamanders (and, for the official opening and a short period after, with guest appearance of Karlo, the biggest male from Karlsruhe). Besides that, the zoo re-published the novel *Válka s mloky* (War with the Newts) by famous Czech writer Karel Čapek also in the form of an audiobook. Furthermore, they newly released a comic book by Jan Štěpánek based on this novel, which has been originally published periodically in parts within *Kometa* and later *ABC* magazine since 1989. Moreover, visitors can sit in one of two big round chairs in the pavilion and listen to the audiobook on headphones. There also is a life-size statue of a giant salamander, silhouettes of salamanders walking on their hind limbs are projected on the wall at the entrance, and at the exit visitors pass by a tall reproduction of the comic book salamander. Some of the Prague Zoo's giant salamanders were named after the characters from Čapek's book (even though these did not start to talk yet or express attempts to dominate the world). The whole pavilion tends to entangle different fields of reference connected to the giant salamanders. The design of the enclosures imitates a rocky cave to evoke the salamanders' natural environment, the campaign, book publishing and audiobook recordings, as well as some salamanders' names are linked to Czech culture and the role of Giant salamanders within it.[17] Finally, as these Giant salamanders come originally from China, there is a huge gate in Chinese style installed in the pavilion. As Stella (2010) points out, in Czech lands, "*similarly to various creatures from medieval encyclopedias and bestiaries, the giant salamanders (or Salamander, Andrias) became a living tradition, something on the boundary of a legend, science and doctrine, rather than just a living creature*"[18] (Stella and Lelková 2010, 225). The Prague Zoo Giant salamander case thus shows significantly how biological, environmental, cultural, literary and other layers of an animal can be intertwined in certain species as well as in its zoo exhibition.

17 It should be noted that the role played by (giant) salamanders in the Czech culture and science cannot be identified solely with the great Čapek's anti-utopian novel, as it is significantly wider and older. For its divers and often ambiguous forms, see Stella and Lelková, 2010.

18 "Podobně jako různí tvorové ze středověkých encyklopedií a bestiářů se velemloci (či Mloci) stali spíše než živoucími tvory živoucí tradicí, čímsi na hranici legendy, vědy a věrouky."

Figure 11: Prague Zoo's Giant salamanders. Source: Prague Zoo website (1 and 2), author (3)

3.4.7 When Animals Educate

I have argued that zoos stress in their selfpresentation predominantly the educational and conservationist function of the institution. Even though I tried to show how different, sometimes officially unacknowledged functions are fulfilled by zoos through animals or otherwise, it does not mean that the animals do not also take the form of educators.

The zoo space offers different possibilities of how to educate its public. Visitors can observe directly the animals and their behavior (even though it does not necessarily mean they see typical behavior of the represented species, as noted in 2.2.1), read the captions and images on information panels, use the modern touchscreens, watch documentary videos projected on large screens, make use of the interactive exhibits (e.g. a thermographic camera mediating snake vision) or receive information from other people, whether by taking part in commented visits with designated staff members or from fellow visitors, often parents or grandparents explaining to children.

There are visitors who indeed seem interested in looking at the animals, frame them

into pictures but also comment their appearance or actions. It may be questioned how deeply these visitors are interested in gaining knowledge about the animals and how many informations about them they retain, nevertheless, the living animal is in center of their attention.

> Terrarium. 3 Russian males in their mid-20. They are taking pictures of almost every animal, the big python for longest. They also comment what they see a lot: animals, lighting, "*Hey, there is a frog! Here is a snake in the front, and there is a frog, too!*" When they come outside, a peacock squawks from distance, the men repeat the sound cheerfully. (March 20, 2014)

There are people who show their interest by watching the animals, reading the panels or their parts and sometimes they even actively talking about the animals, as a man with a boy, who both observed the animals, conversed about them and knew some of them by their given name:

> 'Africa from near' pavilion, exterior. A man (30) and a child (7) walking through the outside area. The man reads the whole description of porcupine (who lies in his burrow and is almost not visible), tells the boy how long the spines are, and shows the scale by his hands, etc. The boy adds that it won't be good to touch him. Walking to the bat-eared foxes, they call them making *tss, tss*. They watch them and the man comments again what he has read on the tables. "*They eat bugs!*" "*That's good, they won't eat away anything then...*" answers the boy. "*They have a lot of molar teeth* (*What's that? - The posterior teeth*). *So they can grind up the bugs into a mash... And then, when they are full, the lie down like this*." Then, they search for the honeybadger in the adjacent enclosure: "*Čert!*" As they do not see him, the man says: "*Come on, let's go to the cockroaches!*" (April 6, 2014)

The animal educators can be those in form of graphic or plastic representation. Some of them appear to get less attention (as for example the wooden reliefs of birds with spread wings comparing the span, April 23, 2012). The artifacts that can be touched and are distinctive, like the skull of a hippopotamus, receive more attention: visitors touch the teeth, take pictures, children search in which part was the eye or the ear, and afterward visitors sometimes also consult the adjacent information table (April 6, 2014). Occasionally, it is the children who by means of the educational animals teach themselves and the adults:

> Interior of the penguins' pavilion. A boy (7) is standing by the two-dimensional models of various penguin species. He says to the adults: "*I'm bigger than the biggest of penguins, the emperor penguin! Look what is the smallest penguin like!*" (June 30, 2013)

In accordance with the recreational and entertaining function of zoos, some of the visitors find most interest in the curiosities within the informations provided by the educational tables:

> Lemurs' open enclosure. A group of 4 adults and a child, watching lemurs walking and jumping over their heads. A woman refers to them as 'king Jelimán' [see 3.4.6]. After some time, a man starts to read the species names from the tables. He explains to the child, where they come from, using the map of Madagascar on the table. The woman also looks then at the table, and loudly reads a part about lemurs' scent glands and adds to the others: "*I hope he will not mark us, too!*" The adults then joke on the topic of scent glands.

Even though the zoo follows the trend of creating nature-like environment in its newest enclosures, sometimes even the children do wonder, when observing the animals, about their nature and the environment in which they live:

> Fur seals exhibits, they are swimming in the pool, making turns underwater near the watching humans. A boy (7) comments: "*They can stay underwater for such a long time, I couldn't last so long!*" Then, he turns to a woman: "*And they enjoy it here? I thought they prefer to be in the sea...*" "*Well, evidently they do,*" she answers. "*I thought that they would prefer to be in the sea than in the zoo?*" - "*These have never seen the sea, so they are content here.*"

From observation of the animals and their specific abilities, the young visitor passed to contemplating the nature of the environment and how possibly the animals feel about it. The woman actually makes the division between the 'wild' and zoo animal and its preferences.

Sometimes animals fail to educate, when they do not behave according to the facts that the visitors have learned earlier about them, probably from the wildlife documentaries, and what they expect from them:

> Meerkats enclosure. A woman (50) explains to 2 children: "*There is always one who is on guard... well, they are quite sloppy now...*" Later, a man also describes to a child that one of the meerkats

patrols and warns others about incoming dangers. "*And which one is it?*" asks the child. "*Probably none of them now...*" (April 6, 2014)

Other times, animals fail to educate as they cease to be in the center of visitors' attention. Therefore, the following section shows how the attractions that are present at the zoo divert the attention from animals to other activities or objects.

3.4.8 Why Look at Animals... When There Are Other Things to Do

This last subchapter does not directly show a specific conception of animals, nevertheless I include it here as I find it important to point out that in zoos, those 'places with animals', the animal can indeed become marginal and overlooked. This 'invisible animal' is nevertheless different from the one presented above in 3.4.2, where it disappeared in the meticulously designed wilderness it inhabits. Here, the animals are covered by the other attractions or possibilities the zoo offers to the visitors so they can become uninteresting in the comparison or they are equal to them at best:

Woman: "*Will we go for some tidbits?*" "*No, I want to the gorillas!*" answers the child. The woman persuades him to go for a snack, that the uncle needs a coffee. (March 20, 2014)

"*Come on, let's go at the tigers,*" says a woman. "*No, let's go for pancakes!*" answers the other one. (March 20, 2014)

Sometimes, visitors are more appealed to the leisure services the zoo offers, as the restaurants, cafeterias and refreshment stands. They take a ride on the chairlift, watching the Prague panorama, or on the elephant ride simulator, where they can for a fee, after waiting in the line, enter into an 'indigenous hut' inside of which they experience an authentic ride on a robotic elephant back. Likewise, people spent their time taking pictures by the statues and other objects, as mentioned when presenting the elephants' exhibit.

In other cases visitors, especially children, become bored by animals and directly express their indifference toward them:

Cape fur seals. A woman in late 60s with 2 children. "*Look, there is one fur seal!*" the woman points avidly. "*And what about it?*" answers the child. "*What do you mean, 'what about it'?*" The

child runs away, the second one asks: "*When will we go home? Will we go by bus?*" (June 30, 2013)

Penguins. Man and woman (30) with 2 children are approaching the penguins' pavilion. "*I don't wanna go there, it doesn't interest me,*" shouts one of the children and then they both run towards the swings. "*This is great,*" the man says with resignation, and the adults enter the pavilion alone. (June 30, 2013)

There is a group of visitors, which despite being in the zoo manifest general disinterest in the animals, engaged in another activities:

Feline pavilion and terrarium. A woman over 60 with a child (3) comes to the bench. Then, she notices a tiger and jumps up: "*Jesus, there is a tiger!*" and takes the child to the enclosure. After a while, the child walks back and stops at the pillars with buttons. He pushes them and lights go on at some drawings of animals on the wall. "*And here is a snake,*" the woman calls at him. The boy stays at the pillars, growls, pushes buttons, hisses. "*Come here, let's look at the snake, there is a beautiful snake!*" the woman tries. "*No!*" - "*You can return there later, now have a look,*" she takes him to the snake. The child lies on the floor and cries: "*No, no, no!*" She carries him to the snake crawling at the front glass. The boy runs immediately away. After some time sitting resigned on the bench, she says: "*Say goodbye to the animals, we have to go to other animals... animals are awaiting us!*" (March 22, 2013)

Among people not paying attention to animals, two main groups can be recognized: couples who take a walk through the zoo, chat and promenade. For the walkers, animals serve sometimes as a meeting point, a landmark as the otter exhibit on a crossroad where people meet, buy some refreshment on the adjacent stand, consult the zoo map etc., often without any stronger concern about the otters themselves. The other group are people who are not completely voluntarily in the zoo, which are mainly children with adults who took them there.

3.4.9 Zoo Chimera: Conclusion

The analysis shows that the meaning of the 'zoo animal' can be variable and heterogeneous. The zoo animal is a result of diverse gazes upon animals and attitudes toward them. Zoo visitors as well as the zoo institution itself thus create a 'chimeric beast' intertwining the biological species and its scientific and educational potential, the animal as a cultural image, as a symbol, as an (anthropomorphic) personality, as an individual and species representative, or

the 'invisible', marginalized animal. As Stella and Lelková point out, "*whereas a 'hybrid' results from a misalliance of two different species, 'chimeras' are more a certain fusion of diverse species*"[19] (2010, 239). For this reason, I chose the notion of chimera in order to express the specific character of the zoo animal, as it absorbs different, often contradictory forms and conceptions, and creates a unity of them.

The zoo animal is a distinct personality. The zoo actively builds PR for particular non-human persons and visitors come to the zoo in order to see the celebrities they heard about: they learn about their life stories, get to know their individual character, and follow their media coverage (in magazines, on television, social media or even in 'reality shows'). If earlier the animals in zoos were used as an example of the species, today, their individuality is accentuated. The visitors create hierarchies among the animals based on their attractiveness, and subsequently, the zoo installs these hierarchies through their design and campaigns, and vice versa.

At the same time, the zoo animal is a mere decoration of a spectacular environment. Within the forged 'safe wilderness', animals lose their central role in the exhibits. They retreat as the meticulously designed fake natural environment becomes the main object of the gaze.

The zoo animal becomes the preeminent Other, the exotic, mysterious, romanticized but also inferior, subaltern counterpart of humans. The zoo animal replaces the non-European ethnics in the role of the Other, as the zoo dares to build upon the atmosphere of exoticism and to use approaches that ethnographic museums and similar institutions have abandoned and tend to reflect.

The zoo animal holds up a mirror to humans. It serves them as a metaphor, as the humans project into it human characteristics, motivations and personalities, and thus observe themselves from a distance. The zoo animal can provide a moral example, making visitors reflect on their own behavior or their lifestyle and priorities.

The zoo animal is a toy, a puppet for the visitors. It is regarded as something nice, cuddly and adorable, and serves primarily for entertainment of the human visitors. It is destined to be there for the humans, to serve their needs — and mainly their need for entertainment, hence it becomes a source of fun or even mocking. The zoo animal is hereby subjected to the process of disnification: it turns into a stereotyped, trivialized subject.

The zoo animal is a visual stimulus. It provokes to 'hunt for', create and collect images.

19 "Zatímco „hybrid" vzniká mesaliancí dvou odlišných druhů, jsou „chiméry" spíše jakousi fúzí různých druhů."

The production and reproduction of the various visual forms of the zoo animal leads to the phenomenon of multiplication of representations, as the animal that becomes representation is reproduced again to create a new one, multiplying their volume as well as representational modes.

The zoo animal is a representation. The boundary between the living creature *an sich* and the representational layers and outgrowths can blur and they become interchangeable. Even more, the representation can consequently emerge as being better than reality itself. It is not the living animate creature that the reference is founded on, but a representational one, to which the zoo animal is compared. Sometimes the zoo animal becomes a projection or representation itself of an external template.

The zoo animal acts as an educator. Directly or in the form of graphic or plastic representation, it is a source of knowledge about itself, a wild animal species or nature. It educates visitors as the living being, as an image on the information panel, on the touchscreen, in a documentary or as a statue.

Last but not least, the zoo animal is also invisible. It is a boring thing, marginal and overlooked subject immersed within the zoo among other attractions and offers of leisure services and activities, to which it is equal or even rendered uninteresting in comparison. It is a background image for walks, conversations and other pursuits. All of this coexists within the creature that is designated as — or the construct that is covered under the name of — the zoo animal.

Figure 12: The many forms and shapes of the elephant.

Conclusion

Zoological gardens are specific cultural institutions where the human-animal relationship and the manners in which the animal is comprehended in the given time and space are manifested. The objective of the present thesis was to show how the Prague Zoo embodies these phenomena. In my research, I focused on the ways in which the zoo animal is constructed through the gaze of visitors and by the institution of Prague Zoo. I argue against some critics of zoological gardens who claim that people cannot encounter or look at a real animal in the zoo, as e.g. Berger (2007) asserts. Visitors do look at animals and observe them, only do the animals perhaps take a different form, that of a *zoo animal*. Furthermore, the zoo animal does educate the visitors. Nevertheless, the question is about what and how they educate, since the zoo animal is different from the one designated as 'wild', which the zoo animal is sometimes thought to represent. The zoo as a place of education does exist; however, it coexists with other forms of experiencing the animal.

By means of participant observation and analysis of the visual and textual materials that the zoo provides within its territory as well as on its official website, I have discussed the forms and meanings borne by the zoo animal. These cover cultural, social, scientific, ecological, etc. conceptions of the zoo animal and can be incarnated in many diverse representational forms. The zoo animal is a heterogeneous entity. It can be seen as a personalized animal — an individual with a specific character and life story. This personalization can also have the form of anthropomorphization, whether resulting in a distinct personality with both animal and human traits, or in veiling the animal under a human coat, using it as a mirror or a metaphor for some human person or people in general. It then becomes an empty animal, a *tabula rasa* onto which meanings are inscribed. It is also being exoticized, adopting the role of the Other, the exotic, mysterious, subaltern creature against which humans can compare and delimit themselves. Furthermore, it becomes an invisible animal, overlooked in the competition of the artificial man-made environment or leisure services and attractions. As the zoo institution itself, its animals adopt contradictory roles. They retreat from the center of attention, yet they stand out as attractive personalities or even celebrities. They represent the exotic and different, yet they depict humans. They can be a hero, a decoration, a mirror, a toy, a cluster of pixels, a two- or three-dimensional reproduction, an educator or a specter — or possibly all of them at once. All these coexist within the chimeric beast that is the zoo animal.

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